



ELECTION EDUCATION AND OBSERVATION PARTNERS

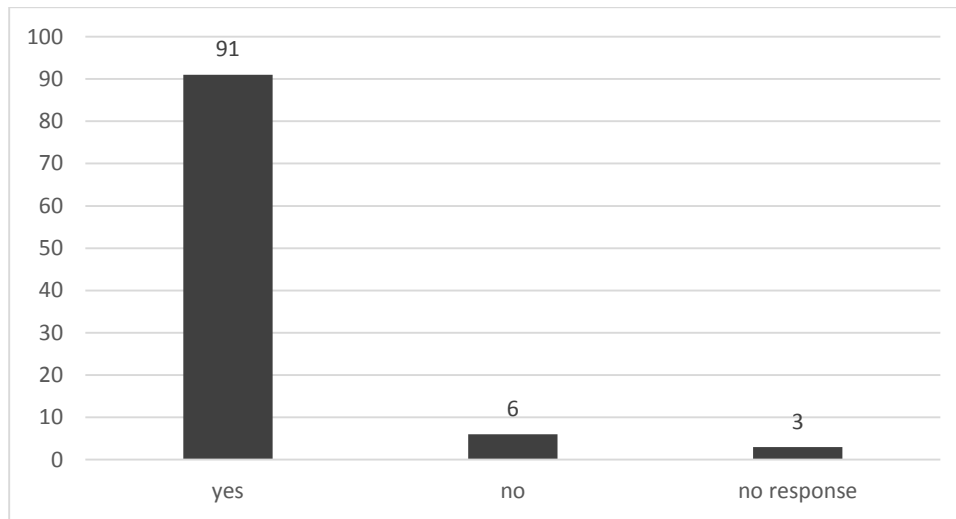
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Assessment of the Electoral Environment By EEOP Coordinators and LTOs (November 5, 2015)

In addition to their responsibility to recruit, train, and manage election day observers, EEOP coordinators and long term observers (LTOs) have been monitoring the electoral process in their communities, interviewing officials from government and political parties, and speaking to ordinary voters and volunteer observers. To gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the electoral environment across the country in the week before the elections we conducted a survey of the coordinators and asked them to give their opinion on critical aspects of the electoral process. Their responses are summarized in the text and charts below.

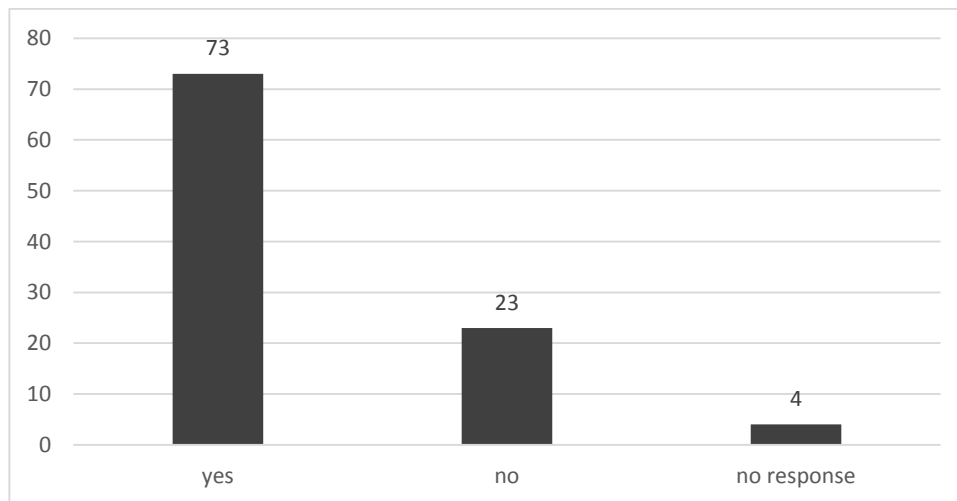
Campaign Environment

1. Are all of the political parties free to organize, recruit new members, and campaign in your area?



Coordinators and LTOs felt that in most cases political parties were free to organize and campaign, a very positive contrast with previous elections, where party activity was often discouraged or disrupted.

2. Has campaigning been largely peaceful and fair?



Although campaigns took place without significant problems in a large majority of areas, a quarter (25%) of coordinators and LTOs reported problems. Voters (who were less likely to provide any response) reported similar levels of concern.



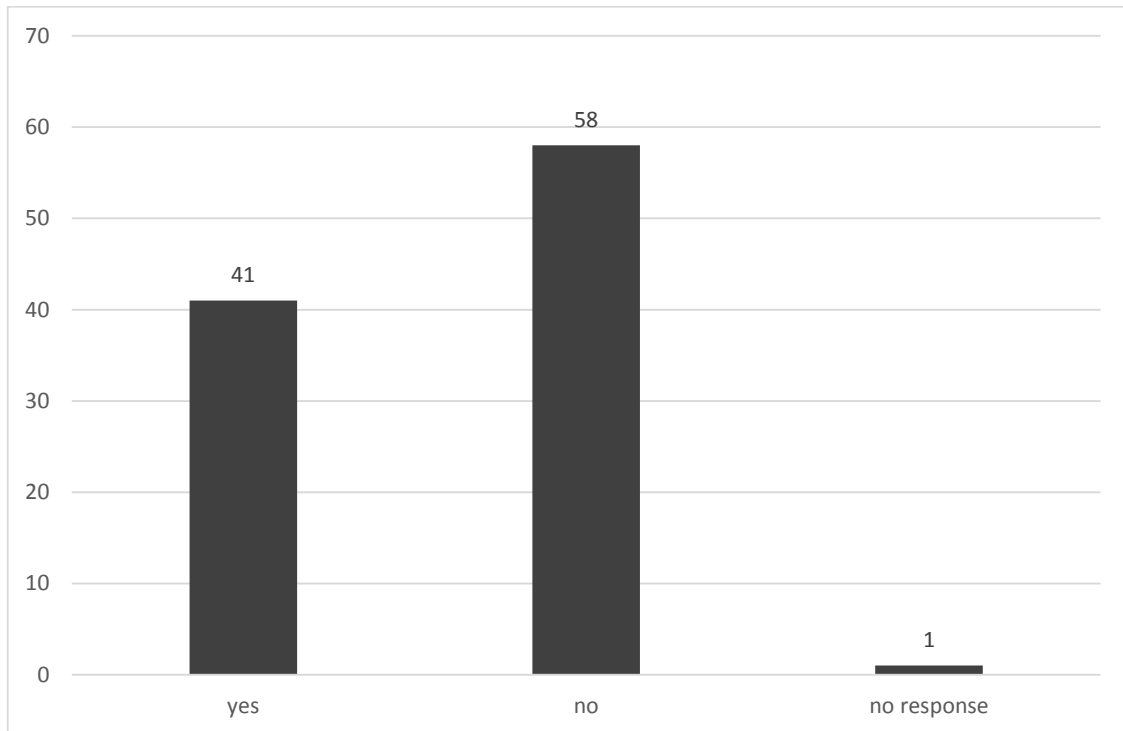
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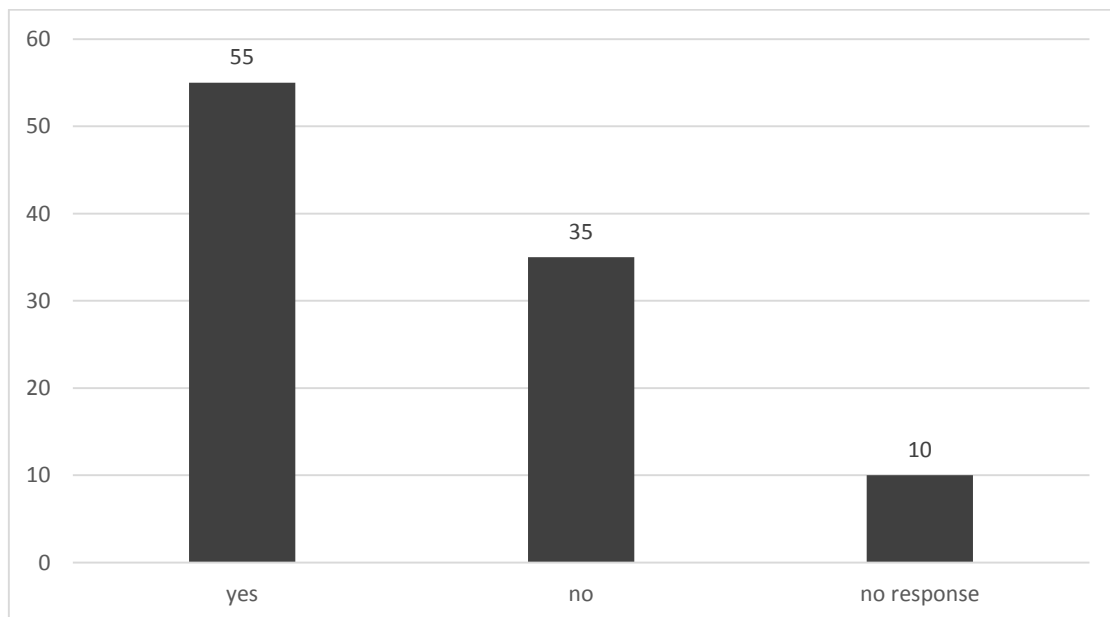
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3. *Were any government resources (cars, buildings, radio station, etc.) unfairly used to support the campaign of a political party?*



At 41%, LTOs and coordinators were significantly more likely to notice misuse of government resources than ordinary voters (24%).

4. *In your area have any parties or candidates tried to buy votes with money or gifts?*



Coordinators and LTOs also reported vote-buying activities in more than half (55%) of the areas observed. The voter survey suggests that many voters expect vote-buying, and that they do not believe it affects the quality of the election process.



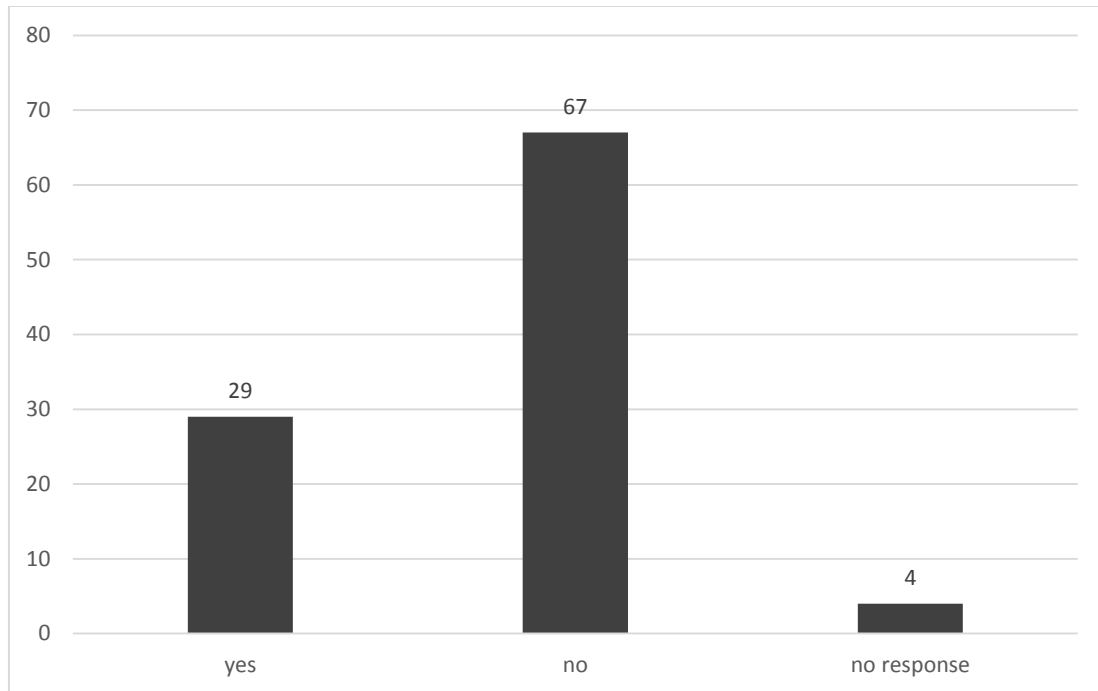
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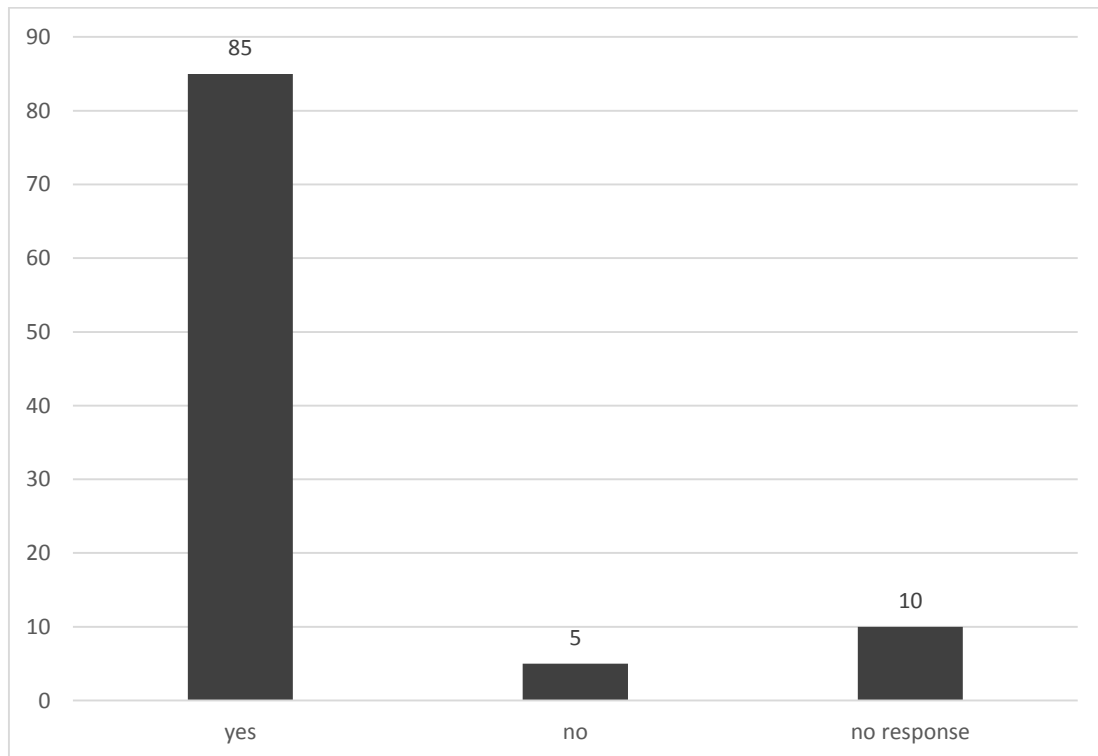
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5. Have any parties or candidates used threats or violence to try to influence voters?



Threats and violence are less reported than vote buying, but still affected almost a third (29%) of areas covered by observers

6. Do ordinary citizens have freedom of association, speech, and movement?



Although they are concerned with vote-buying and the potential for election-related violence, the vast majority believe ordinary citizens have the rights necessary for effective democratic participation.



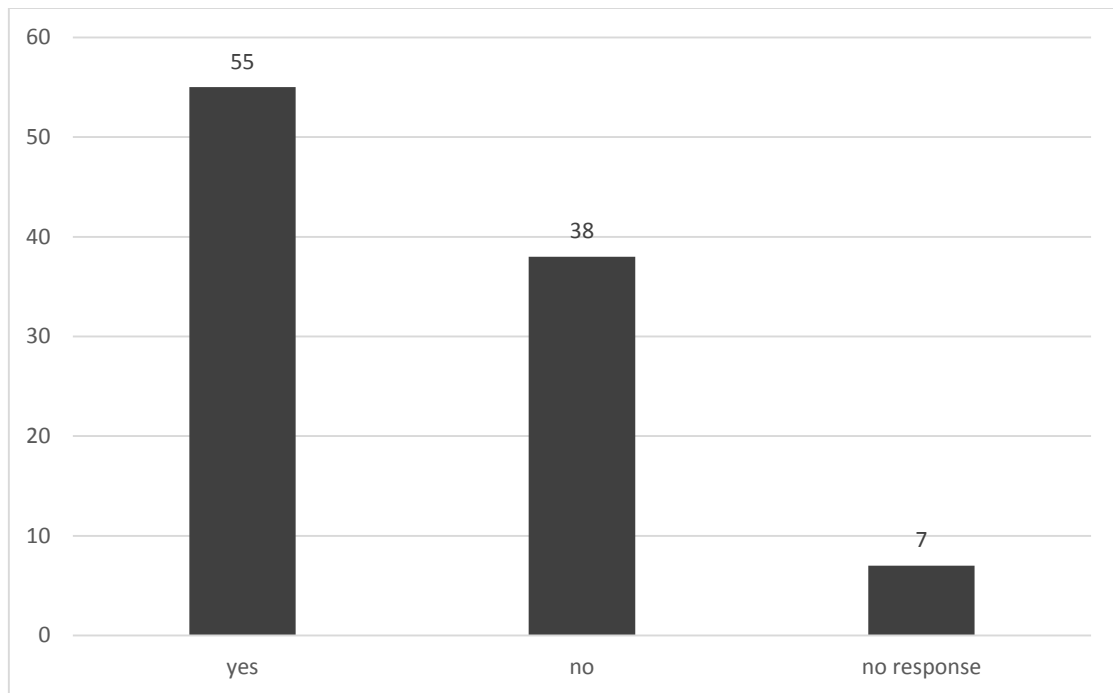
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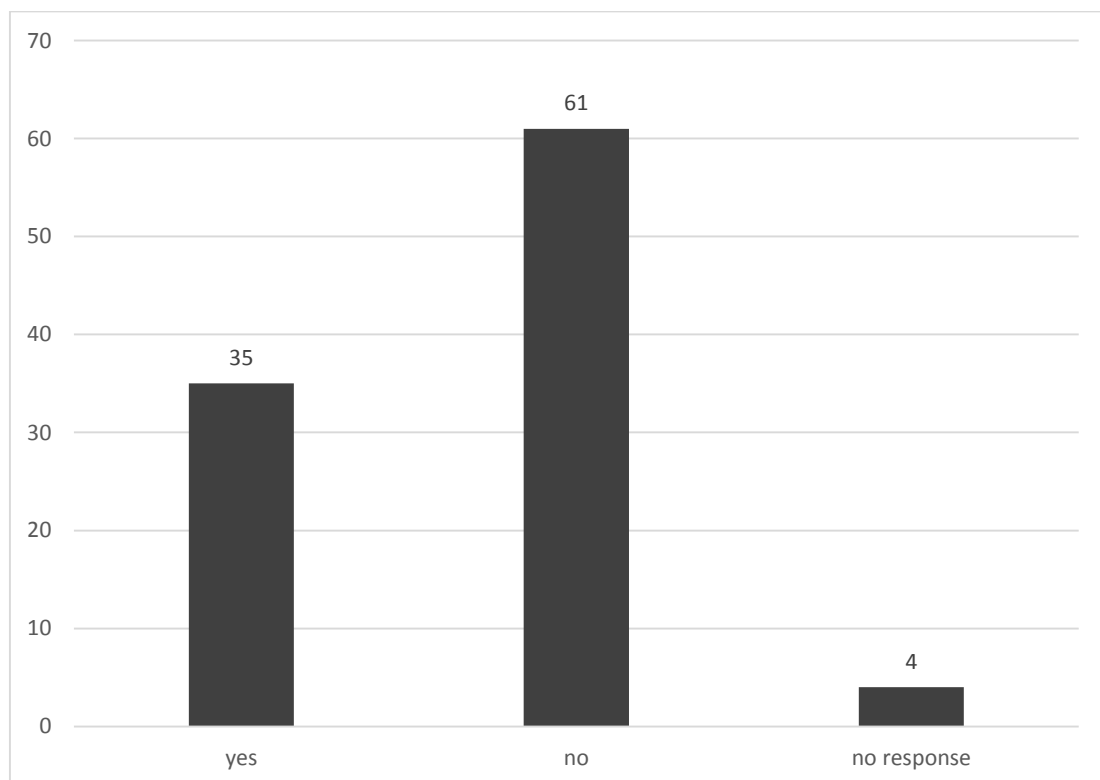
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7. *Is the security environment conducive to a free and fair election?*



Voter Education

8. *Do people have enough information on the platforms and policies of the different parties and candidates competing so that they can make an informed choice on election day?*



Only a third (35%) believe parties and candidates have done enough to inform voters about their policies and platforms, but two-thirds (63%) of voters are confident in their choice.



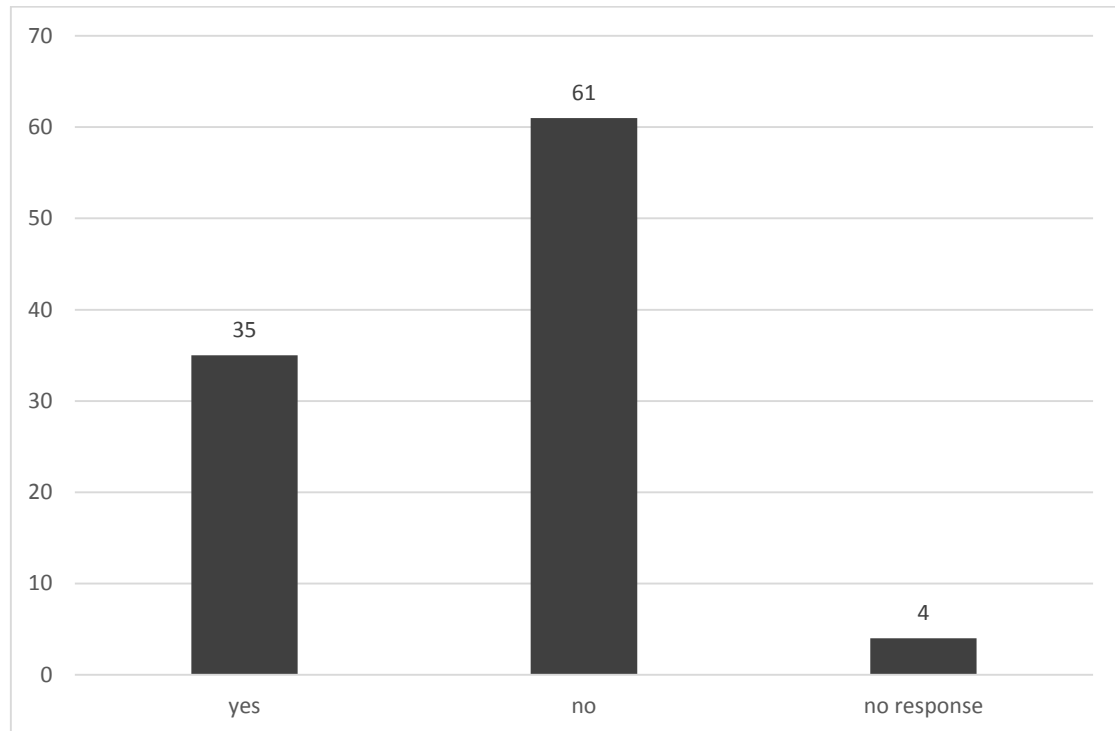
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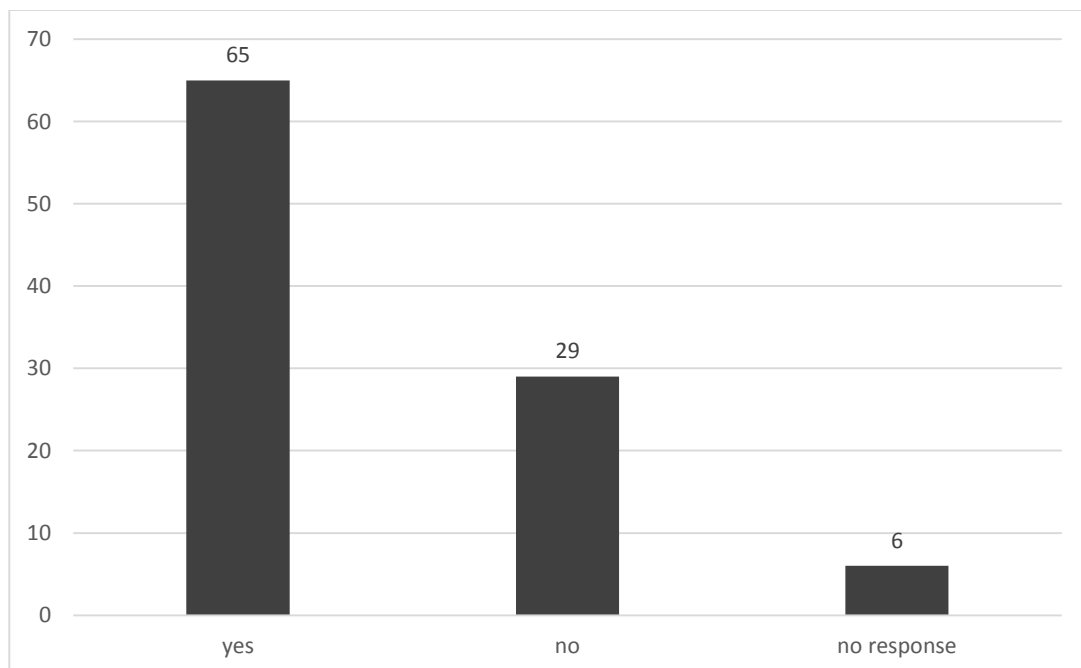
9. Do people have sufficient knowledge of the electoral processes (how and where to register, complain, and vote) to participate effectively in the election process?



Voter education on the election process has also been ineffective in some areas, suggesting there may be some confusion at the polling place on election day.

Election Administration

10. Are most people in your area registered to vote?



At the time the survey was in the field there is a perception that significant numbers of voters (29%) remain unregistered.



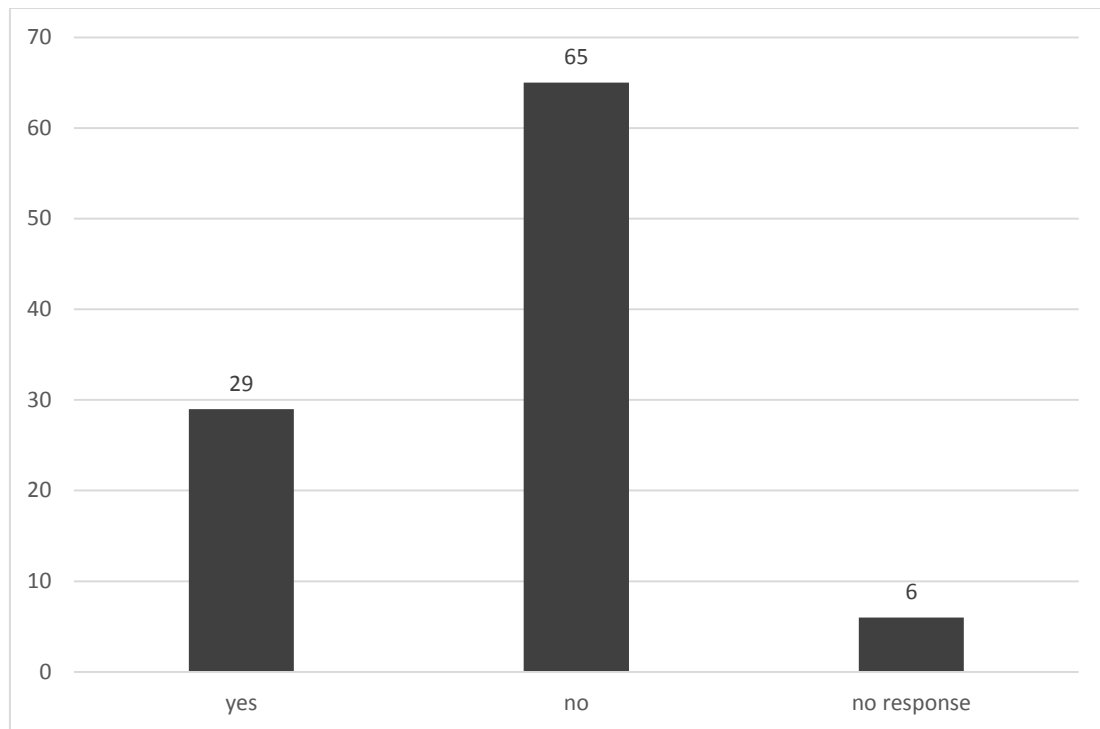
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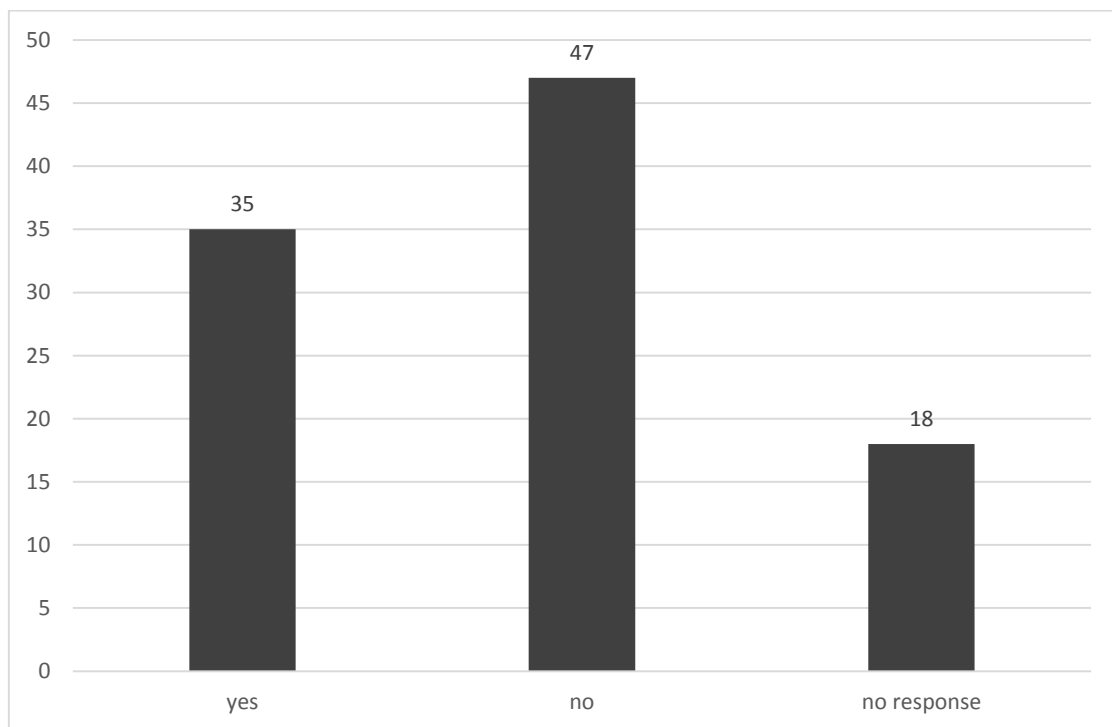
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11. Have any groups or minorities had difficulty or been unfairly prevented from registering?



In a third of areas (29%) minorities and other marginalized groups faced difficulty or hindrances registering to vote, suggesting they may be under-represented in the voting and subsequent government.

12. Are the local election officers well-trained and well organized to conduct the election?



Just as the LTOs perceived voter education—largely conducted by the UEC—as weak, they also see the training provided to local officers as ineffective. If this assessment is true, poorly trained staff are likely to contribute to a chaotic election in which confusion and inefficiency damages the credibility of the process.



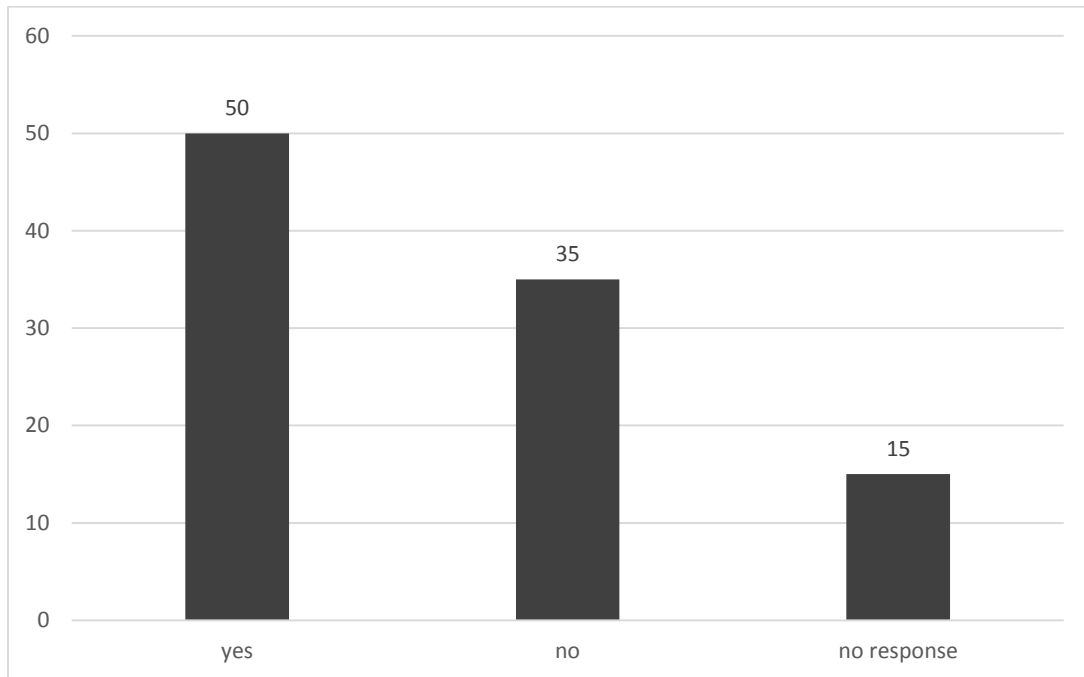
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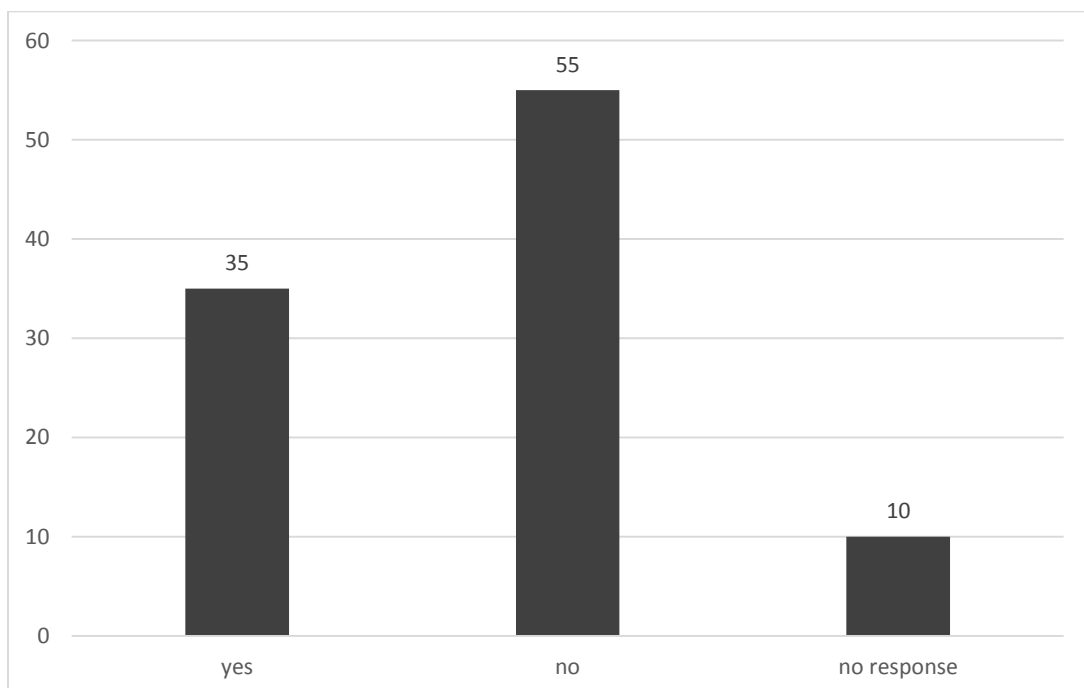
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13. Has the local election administration received the materials and support needed to conduct the elections?



At the time the survey was in the field half of all areas had already received their materials.

14. Are election officials perceived by voters as neutral administrators of the electoral process?



Reflecting the general trend, just a third of coordinators and LTOs believed that the election officials would administer the process in a fair and unbiased way.



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About the EEOP

Election Education and Observation Partners (EEOP) is a non-partisan independent voter education and election observation coalition with 23 members and alliances from all states and regions of Myanmar. Founded in March 2013, the EEOP's members include: New Myanmar Foundation (NMF), Democratic Force (DF), Rural Development Network (RDN), Metta Campaign, Wisdom Banner, Nwe Oo Foundation, Pwint Phyu Observer Group, Magwe Observer Network, Social Actors' Group, Youth Development Network, Paungde Observer Group, Pyay Observer Group (FPSS), Green Network, Rhododendron Indigenous Development (RID) Association, Tedim Youth Fellowship (TYF), KRDO, Cherry Image, Kyaukmae Development Network, Kayan Women Organization (KWO), Top Youth, Bilin Observer Group, Wunlark Development Foundation and Public Welfare Network.

In advance of the elections EEOP has provided civic and voter education through trainings across the country, and monitored voter registration and the campaign period. EEOP has applied for accreditation for over 1500 observers (68% male and 32% female) who will be deployed at polling stations in more than 100 townships to monitor the election on Nov. 8. While this is the first involvement in elections for some members, others participated in secretly observing the elections in 2010, and openly provided voter education for and observed the bi-elections in 2012. Regardless of experience, all members share a passion for and commitment to democracy in Myanmar, and unlike most observation groups that were founded and funded with international support, EEOP is almost entirely self-funded by its members—although it maintains a strong relationship with the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL).

Contact Election Education and Observation Partners (EEOP)

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