

Report of Youth and Policing Summit in Lagos State

Summit Proceedings



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The mission of CLEEN Foundation is to promote public safety, security and accessible justice through empirical research, legislative advocacy, demonstration programmes and publications, in partnership with government and civil society.

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Preface

The nature of contacts between the youths and the police is usually within the narrow confines of law enforcement setting. The quality of such contacts perhaps is the basis for the kind of the relationship shared by Youths and the Police. A relationship characterized by mistrust, intimidation, misunderstanding which has most often led to indiscriminate violence resulting in destruction of state and private properties and claiming lots of lives of innocent citizens in Lagos State.

It is against this background that CLEEN Foundation in collaboration with the Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF) with financial support from CORDAID , Netherlands in 2009 developed a project meant to break the cycle of police- youth hostility in Lagos State by creating non-threatening avenues for interactions between the two groups outside law enforcement milieu .The summit on Youth and Policing in Lagos State organized at the Lagos Airport Hotel Ikeja , on the 10th is therefore a follow up to the study carried out by CLEEN Foundation on Police-Youth Relationship in Lagos state, which recommended among other things the organization of interactive forums on youth and Policing to help re- build trust and foster more positive interactions between youths and the police. And Secondly ,empowering a special police unit that focuses exclusively on young people, and holding youth and police forums that encourage communication and understanding. Participants to the summit were drawn from all walks of life, they include Police Officers from State CID, students, teachers, National Road Transport workers (NURTW), Lagos State Security Trust fund (LSSSTF), youths from local communities and civil society groups.

The Objectives of the seminar were to:

- Bring together stakeholders on youth and policing in Lagos State to discuss and agree on a set of measures that could be implemented to improve the relationship between young people and the police in Lagos;

- present to stakeholders the key findings of the Youth and Policing Study in order to validate the findings;
- Enable participants discuss and possibly agree on the need to establish on a pilot basis a platform for periodic interaction between the police and youths in selected police divisions.

This Publication is in two parts. Part one is a compilation of the proceeding of the summit which is divided into two chapters. Chapter one focuses on addresses, goodwill speeches and remarks delivered at the opening session of the summit. Chapter Two, dwells on papers presented during the plenary sessions. And the last session ties up the communiqué, drawn up at the end of the summit, together with agreements and resolution on the way forward. The last part of this publication provides a detailed report of the summit on Youth and Policing for 2010.

We are optimistic that this publications will steer the police and youths as well as other stakeholders in Youth and Policing such parents , teachers , community youth groups, other law enforcement officials to the right direction in analyzing the problems of the youths and Police in the state, and help them in understanding the basic things to be considered in designing workable solutions to those challenges.

Onyinye Onyemobi
Programme Officer
Public Safety and Security

Part One

Opening Remarks

Welcome Remarks

by

Innocent Chukwuma

Executive Director, CLEEN Foundation

Introduction

On behalf of the CLEEN Foundation I warmly welcome you all to this summit on Youth and Policing in Lagos State, being organized by the CLEEN Foundation in collaboration with the Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF) and the Nigeria Police Force, Lagos State Command.

The theme of this summit is carefully chosen to enable us highlight and hopefully address one of the most fundamental challenges in policing today, which is the deteriorating relationship between young people and the police in many countries of the world including Nigeria. Succinctly the relationship between young people and the police has been characterized by mutual suspicion, hostility and sometimes violence. Pressure from members of the public, the media and elites on the police to crack down on crime has often led to disproportionate attention of law enforcement officials on the youth who are seen to fall within the age of crime. This has led to the use of more aggressive forms of intervention against the youth, which fuels the mutual animosity between them and the police (Alder et al, 992).

In response to this problem, governments and other stakeholders in various countries of the world have developed different kinds of programs and measures to integrate young people in the developmental process and minimize frictions between them and the police and other authority figures in their lives. In Nigeria however, little effort is being done to address the dangerous drift and increasing alienation of the young from the mainstream of society, which has increased their hostility against the government expressed through resentment of any symbol of authority of the state, especially the police, who in turn are not known to react kindly to such situations.

In a bid to contribute to finding solutions to this intractable problem, the CLEEN Foundation in collaboration with the Lagos State Security trust Fund (LSSTF) with support from CORDAID Netherlands, developed an integrated project aimed at improving relationship between police and young people in Lagos State as a pilot case. Activities under this project include a study on young people's attitude to the police and police treatment of young people in Lagos State. A summary of the findings would be presented in the first plenary session. This Youth and Policing Summit in Lagos State together with the holding of periodic youth and police interactive forums in two police divisions in the state come as a result of the recommendations made from the Study.

This Summit aims to:

- bring together stakeholders on youth and policing in Lagos State to discuss and agree on a set of measures that could be implemented to improve the relationship between young people and the police in Lagos;
- present to stakeholders the key findings of the Youth and Policing Study in order to validate the findings;
- enable participants discuss and possibly agree on the need to establish on a pilot basis a platform for periodic interaction between the police and youths in selected police divisions.

This summit is divided into three sessions to provide participants ample opportunities to contribute in the discussion. In the first session after this opening address, we will have three presentations on the theme of summit from a youth worker, a police official and summary of the study carried out by CLEEN Foundation on Youth and Policing. After the presentations, we will have ample time for responding to the presentations, which will take us to lunch. After lunch, we will proceed to the second session, which is an open plenary discussion using the principles of identifying core blockages and recommending high impact solutions. The third and final session will focus on report back to plenary, agreement on issues to be included in the plenary and finally end with closing remarks from the organizers.

We thank CORDAID Netherlands for supporting this summit and the study that preceded it.

We also thank our partners in the project - the Lagos State Security Trust Fund and the Nigeria Police Force, Lagos State Command. Not left out is our brother Juma Assiago who came all the way from UN HABITAT based in Nairobi, Kenya, our resource persons and you the participants, who left your work to be with us.

Thank you all.

Opening Remarks

by

Mr. Marvel Akpoyibo
Lagos State Commissioner of Police

Introduction

I am deeply delighted to be part of this all important forum. As a Police Officer with the official duty of superintending over Lagos State Police Command - the largest command with the most complex policing mandate in Nigeria - and having the opportunity to interface with CLEEN Foundation, the civil society in the drive towards fashioning a synergy between the police and the community, I will always be grateful.

This forum targets perhaps the most important group in our society - the youths. Aside constituting the age group involved in a preponderance of crimes, youths also constitute the highest percentage of victims of crime profile in Lagos State. The reasons for this are not farfetched. Youths are a vibrant group with very active intellectual and physical abilities with a tempting urge to express these potentials. Unfortunately, when the opportunities to positively express such potentials are limited, the temptation of expressing them negatively becomes higher and attractive. Inversely, because youths are the active social group, they are present on the streets and other areas susceptible to crime than the adult group. Hence, they are more likely to be victims of crime.

The combined effect of these facts is that youth, naturally attract more police attention, and are more policed than other age groups. It therefore becomes inevitable, that there will always be deep seated animosity between the youths and the police. Recent experience in Lagos State indicates that such frosty relationship has snowballed on a number of occasions to violent confrontations between the police and youths, and has led to avoidable loss of lives and property.

This situation needs not be so. Modern policing has since advanced towards community-oriented policing whereby every segment of the society is seen as a stakeholder in security management. In this orientation, Nigerian youths are fundamental. Their rich intellectual and physical abilities could be positively harnessed and channeled towards crime prevention. However, this can only be done if a strong and cordial working relationship exists between the police and the youths and both could be encouraged to collaborate and reduce mutual suspicion in the fight against crime and social vices. It is my conviction that a forum of this nature is a veritable opportunity that could effectively encourage this line of collaboration as it provides an opportunity for the police and youths to rub minds, communicate and build mutual confidence as partners in the task of ensuring a safe society.

Consequently, I wish to commend the management of CLEEN Foundation and the Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF) for not just initiating and facilitating the organization of this forum, but also for being very consistent over the years in supporting the Lagos State Police Command in the areas of enhanced public relations, institutional and human capacity development.

As the programme goes into details, I implore all participants to be courageous in identifying conflict areas and fashion a workable framework for interaction between the police and youths with a view to assisting the police attain our statutory mandate in a manner that conforms to international human rights standards. I wish you a fruitful intellectual engagement.

Part Two

Paper Presentations

Keynote Speech on Comparative Experience in Dealing with Urban Youth in Africa

by
Juma Assiago

Introduction

First and foremost, allow me at the onset to express my sincere appreciation to the organizers of this conference, for inviting UN-HABITAT to this auspicious forum. As you know, UN-HABITAT, the focal UN agency for local authorities, is present in Nigeria, with offices in Abuja, having several engagements to date with various actors in the field of urban safety, including most recently an Expert Group Meeting on Policing Urban Spaces held last year. For me, this is indeed my second opportunity here in Nigeria to address such a distinguished gathering with the previous one at a 2002 Conference on Security and Segregation in West African cities hosted by the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA) in Ibadan. My keynote address focuses on the work of UN-HABITAT's Safer Cities Programme in addressing urbanization challenges, the need for more inclusive cities, the problems of urban youth, and issues of governance and youth participation.

It is a well known fact that young people and children constitute more than 50 per cent of the total population of the world, and that overall in developing countries, 60 percent of the population is under the age of 30 years. The poor children and youth are usually silent sufferers. Not given a voice and opportunities, they carry the burden of inadequate shelter and services and lack of opportunities, often with great indignity.

By being here, all of you have shown the will to be part of the decision making process governing the city of Lagos and Nigeria as a whole. For that, I wish to appreciate the representatives of youth organizations who are here this morning too.

Report of the state of Urban Youth

In March this year, at the World Urban Forum in Brazil, UN-HABITAT launched the first edition of the State of Urban Youth Report. The main finding of this Report, which came as a response to calls from young people's organizations across the world, is that the 21st century belongs to young people and key to the challenges afflicting them is unequal access to opportunities that urban environments provide. Unequal access is a phenomenon that begins in childhood and continues into youth, and then into adulthood through inequality of opportunity. This deprives youth of their rights to the urban planning, management and governance systems delivering safety at the level of land, housing, infrastructure and basic services. This shift in thinking has also embraced new institutional responsibilities, bringing in "new" actors in the field of crime prevention to complement the criminal justice system. It has also led to advocacy on decentralization of security policies identifying 3 systems of "collaboration" of multiple government departments at the local level rather than the notion of "coordination" of actors at the local level. The role of local government has been increasingly the focus of this institutional effort on the governance of safety at the local level developing and implementing citywide, community-based, partnership driven, crime prevention and urban safety strategies embracing the principle of addressing crime and violence as a common responsibility for all citizens. 14 years into our technical cooperation programmes in Africa, we can say the prevention approach in Africa is relatively young but is increasingly assuming priority in policy formulation processes, particularly those addressing better urban governance and complementing those addressing the criminal justice system.

Examples of the Safer Cities programme's support to cities include the following:

- **At the family and community level:** The Safer Cities programme is assisting local authorities to find ways of integrating the role of families in early prevention and enhancing community support through diversion measures for young offenders.
- **Through victim aid programmes:** The Safer Cities approach also emphasizes that young people are also the victims of violence and in

this context, assists local authorities in facilitating sensitization and training courses for all local stakeholders on ways of detecting various forms of distress and encourage victims to speak out.

- **Through the education system:** The Safer Cities approach involves schools as channels of transmitting civic values to the youth and of involving them at every level of decision-making.

Illustrated tools on Youth in Safer Cities Initiatives in Africa

1. UN HABITAT, through the Safer Cities programme, has also been developing youth offender profiles at the city level to identify the youth motivations for committing crimes, their experiences in crime, their social and economic backgrounds, and their hopes for the future. The surveys have also shown that majority of youth crimes, like other crimes, go unreported. In some cases, crimes reported by the police statistics only captured 25 per cent of the crimes which speak to issues of lack of trust, a common denominator in the comparative experiences of pilot countries, particularly between youth and the police. Furthermore, the youth offender profile also provides the juvenile justice system, and youth-related government departments such as social services and welfare to share their experiences and opinions regarding youth and crime. As such, the youth offender profile provides a ground upon which stakeholders, particularly at the city level, can chart a common strategy to address the causes of youth crime. The Cities of Dar es Salaam, Nairobi and Yaoundé have already developed this tool. The concerns articulated by young people involved in this profiling tool demonstrate their keen awareness of their surroundings and of the problems that affect most people. Their concerns and hopes for the future tend to be simple: young people focused on issues basic to their health and well-being. Few unrealistic demands were made. They wanted lights in the neighbourhood, community access to school spaces over the weekend, sports areas that could be completed for small investment just to mention a few.

2. In Tanzania, UN HABITAT has assisted the City Council of Dar es Salaam with the support of the Inspector General of Police in the development of citywide crime prevention strategy which was included the establishment of a city youth parliament under the local authority as a way of engaging young people in the life of the city.

This tool was adopted from the Municipal Prefecture of Barra Mansa, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which had developed a programme “Citizenship has no size” in order to encourage the participation of young people in the exercise of their rights as citizens and to give importance to their position as active members of their communities. Through a City Consultation process a creative, innovative and participatory project has been integrated in the City of Dar es Salaam, known as the “Youth Council for Participatory Budgeting”. This project has stimulated the participation of children and young people in public management, through the development of their involvement as citizens, raising the essence of their role in their communities, their cities and their country. It has also contributed to the formation of a new type of leader for democratic participatory processes and the development of themes which are important for children and young people to be involved in such as citizenship, democracy and public budgeting. It has resulted in the inclusion of special youth seats in the election of officials for representative and decision-making posts in the Council has also led to projects put forward and prioritised by youth, for which the Municipal Government approved the use of public funds for their implementation. Key to this has been a One Stop Youth Centre adapted from a unique and successful youth centered restorative justice approach in Port Elizabeth, South Africa whose integrated approach involves the criminal justice system, all the social services and the youth in conflict with the law and their families. Last but not least, it has resulted in links made between the work developed in the Young People’s Council and the Municipal Government.

3. In pilot countries where gang violence is prevalent such as South Africa, we have examples of projects and strategies targeting urban youth and

gang violence. Some of the most successful initiatives are modeled on a project that was developed in Boston, United States, in the mid 1990s to respond to youth gang and gun violence (Kennedy et al., 2001). Using a logical, adapted process in conjunction with broad, city-wide partnerships and targeted interventions, Boston achieved a two-thirds reduction in youth homicides over a period of three years. The City of Johannesburg and Durban have institutionalised the Safer Cities approach and are carrying out effective programmes including restorative justice approaches involving the family and the community (The Inanda Family Trail) as well as Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention collaboration with NGOs offering reintegration services for youths in conflict with the law and gang members. The comprehensive community wide approach involves mobilizing the community, providing academic, economic and social opportunities, social interventions involving street outreach workers and a commitment to organizational change and development.

4. In Kenya, UN-HABITAT is assisting the City Council of Nairobi in implementing its citywide crime prevention and urban safety strategy that has included a strong focus on youth crime and violence prevention that is multi-sectoral, targeted and focused on youth engagement and cultural competence. Among the key priorities for this strategy is neighbourhood cohesion and youth opportunities focusing on informal settlements in the cities that are associated with high youth crime and victimization rates. It works to strengthen neighbourhood supports and in partnerships that link the government, local communities and the private sector. A strong emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for young people in the targeted neighborhoods through the use of socio-cultural tools linking recreation and cultural involvement, and on strengthening youth participation and engagement.

Given our interest too at enhancing South - South Cooperation between Latin America and Africa, it is important at this juncture to also share with you some comparative experiences in Brazil and El Salvador in dealing with urban youth that have provided useful learning lessons in recent UN-HABITAT

international forums including the 2008 International Youth Crime Prevention and Cities Summit in Durban, South Africa.

Based on the experience gained by a project called Children and Youth in Organized Armed Violence and as a result of working with young people at risk of, or involved in, organized armed violence in Brazil, The Fight for Peace initiative was established in 2001, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as a partnership project by the organization Viva Rio. It began in Favela with serious problems of poverty, marginalization and armed gangs. The project is open to all young people in the area and offers a combination of sports (boxing), education, work, citizenship and leadership skills training with the aim of providing participants with alternatives to youth gangs and drugs. The value and impact of involving young people directly in the development of youth gang reduction strategies has been underlined by several studies as highly effective.

Another example of strategic interventions concerning youth violence prevention is the Gun Free Towns project supported by the United Nations Development Programme in two cities in El Salvador (San Martin and Ilopango). The project combines public education against guns (often involving youth in developing media and other campaigns), gun confiscation and restrictions on its use, and cultural events aimed at reclaiming high-risk public spaces. A 41% drop in homicides and a 29% reduction in gun-related crimes have been reported since June 2005, and the overall crime rate has also dropped. The lessons learned from this project underscore the importance of political will, a detailed diagnosis of gun-incidence locations, the training of national police and metropolitan agents in inspection and monitoring activities, and local community management.

The Open School Programme (Escola Alberta) implemented in the State of Pernambuco, Brazil, was another promising initiative. Based on the findings that in Brazil, twice as many youth homicides were recorded over the weekend than during the week, the project, which began in 2002 with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other organizations, keeps schools open at weekends to provide cultural and educational opportunities for young people. Parents are also invited. The pilot

programme was found to reduce youth crimes around the city of Recife by 30%, and the programme has now been extended and consolidated into public policy and adopted in other major cities in Brazil.

In addition to the illustrated tools, it is important to highlight the need for standardization of norms addressing youth at risk. The prevention approach requires the definition of youth to fall within that age of transition - between childhood and adulthood - and less of a political definition as provided by many national youth policies. The prevention approach also allows us to decipher young people as heterogeneous and not a homogenous entity hence addressing the various categories of young people in their specificities and not applying a one size fit all strategy for young people at different risk levels such as unemployed youth, school dropouts, slum youth, street youth, ex-offenders, war affected youth and youth gangs. It also allows us to address vulnerable young people as resources to be developed and not problems to be managed, building on their social capital that enhances their self esteem.

Applying Lessons Learned

As outlined above, urbanization is affecting all regions of the world. Urban areas are facing increasing challenges, especially for the children and young people who constitute almost half of the urban poor. The involvement of children and young people in crime and victimization is not going to stop. Responding to these challenges requires strong government will and determination. Cities need to provide leadership. Developing individual programmes is not sufficient. The programmes need to be part of broader local government strategies ensuring the commitment of a wide range of partners—service providers, organizations and individuals—to make sure that they are sustainable beyond the life of one government or the length of one mayor's term of office. The United Nations guidelines for crime prevention, among others, provide a basis for developing such approaches.

Projects that see youth violence and victimization as a public problem and a health problem, that are inclusive and participatory, and that use a strategic approach built on careful analysis and a balanced array of interventions are likely to be effective in the short and the long term. Local responses require a

careful analysis of local contexts, and must be tailored and adapted to those contexts. In all cases, the underlying factors relating to the environment, social and economic opportunities available to young people must be addressed. There is now an impressive amount of experience that is waiting to be translated into effective strategies to prevent and reduce youth violence and gang activities.

We cannot miss the opportunity to stimulate a culture of inclusion and non-violent social change amongst youths, and to provide them with the required training. UN HABITAT through the Safer Cities Programme has embarked on the development of a global strategy aimed at addressing the values of citizenship among youth at risk by developing and working with innovative approaches to crime prevention and juvenile justice. In this respect, it is our hope that participants will use this opportunity not only to identify and synthesize similar experiences here in Nigeria, but also explore the role of cities and local coalitions in addressing the problems of diverse urban youth in Nigerian cities and towns. In addition, develop a network of cities and youth working with youth at risk to enhance information exchange and advocacy.

At the city level, I encourage the Government of Nigeria to formulate and adopt integrated local policies that address youth concerns and to support the creation of local youth partnership bodies, so that youths become involved in decision-making and youth policies can be implemented at the local level through youth action.

We hope that this conference will assist in the further development of integrated local youth policies upon which youth organizations and other organizations working with youth at risk can compliment government efforts in addressing values of citizenship among youths at risk. We also look forward to seeing this conference developing linkages with other urban development processes.

In conclusion, I wish to affirm that UN HABITAT is fully committed to promoting youth initiatives in human settlements, but we cannot do it alone.

We have to join forces in this endeavor. With this thought in mind, I wish to leave you with these words;

No one is born a good citizen;

No nation is born a democracy.

Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime.

Young people must be included from birth.

Because a society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline.

Thank you.

Youth and Policing In Lagos State: The Police Perspective

by
SP Frank Mba

Introduction

The word 'Youth' is a highly nebulous and elastic concept. It has a different meaning for different people in different places. But one thing seems constant in all definitions of the word. It is used in relation to age, and thus usually used to describe a group of people falling within a defined set of age bracket with similar levels of biological, emotional and psychological maturation.

Often times, the term 'youth' is used interchangeably with other words like young people, teenagers, adolescence or juveniles. However, in order to circumvent the intricacies and pitfalls associated with the legal definition of the above mentioned term, this paper will proceed on the assumption that it is set out to deal with the issues of young persons and policing, but without prejudice to the provisions and contents of the Children and Young Persons Law.

Policing Youths in Lagos State: The Target Objectives

Our youths are obviously the most active part of our population. They are energy- packed, vibrant, inquisitive, restless, promising, and often times, limitlessly creative.

Their energies and passions can be deployed either positively or negatively. Their presence, impacts and activities are ubiquitous - at home, school, streets, sporting arenas, dancing halls, market places, factories, etc.

No wonder, policing of youths is a very challenging and complex task. Because of the potentials of youths for both right and wrong, and the general belief that young persons need to be constantly guided to prevent them from making life-wrecking mistakes, law enforcement agents are trained to pay special

attention to youths and youths-related issues. In line with our Mission Statement of “zero tolerance for crimes” in Lagos State, our target objectives in relation to youths in Lagos include:

- Preventing, tackling and managing issues of drug and substance misuse and abuse by young persons.
- Preventing and tackling issues of criminal offences among young persons.
- Tackling issues of risky habits and behaviours such as drunk-driving, over-speeding, suicide, etc among youths.
- Tackling issues of youths violence such as involvement in street gangs, cultism and political violence.
- Tackling and managing vices such as examination malpractices, cyber crimes, prostitution, etc.
- Discouraging the emergence of negative sub-cultures such as ‘area boyism’, etc.
- Tackling and managing all forms of juvenile delinquencies.

Youths and Crime Trend

While it may be unfair to generalize and demonize our youths as the crime-prone segment of our population, it is an undeniable fact that a significant proportion of crimes committed in our society today are committed by our young people. These categories of crimes cut across different types such as armed robbery, car snatching, kidnapping, cyber crimes, etc.

In fact, our statistics shows that in Lagos State, over 80 percent of all violent crimes are committed by young persons within the age bracket of 18 and 35 years. Our statistics also shows that youths are predominantly involved in property crimes such as armed robbery, car snatching, and kidnap for ransom and cyber crimes. As a matter of fact, cyber and internet-enabled crimes have almost become exclusively associated with our youths - thus such slogans like ‘yahoo-yahoo boys’ and not ‘yahoo-yahoo men’. Similarly, the greater percentage of women that engage in prostitution and other forms of commercial sex trade are usually young females between the ages of 17 and 35 years.

However, it is pertinent to note that our youths are also substantially victimized by other criminal elements of our populations. Young persons are the greatest victims of domestic violence, child abuse, human trafficking, rape and defilement. Similarly, our youths also seem to be the greatest victims of corruption and misappropriation of public funds that takes place at the Federal, State and Local Governments levels. Such massive corruptions within governmental institutions have resulted in the poor structures and collapse in our educational system, health sectors and social infrastructure. It has also led to high unemployment rate prevalent in our country today. These in turn have had very negative and sometimes criminological influences on our youths.

Reasons for Youths' Involvement in Crime

Different reasons have been adduced for the seemingly unending involvement of youths in crime. The most common ones are:

- Poor parental upbringing;
- Defective moral upbringing;
- Unemployment;
- Poverty;
- Greed;
- Negative peer influence;
- Urban slums;
- Provocative display of wealth by the rich;
- Seeming Societal tolerance for ill-gotten wealth;
- Weak laws and weak criminal justice system;
- Absence of developmental, social, sporting and other forms of extra-curriculum infrastructures for meaningful and alternative engagement of youths.

Youths' Involvement in Crime- Who is to Blame?

A simplistic and obviously negative approach is to blame young persons for all forms of crimes, delinquencies and social deviancy traceable to them. But realistically speaking, such approach might not be sustainable. Sometimes, some of the factors that propel or provide an enabling environment for young persons to go into crime are essentially outside their control. These include divorce, negative influences by attendants, unemployment, poverty, etc. Thus

the family units, the government and other key socialization institutions such as schools, churches and mosques have a fair share of the blame for moral decadence and delinquency among our young people.

Strategies for Policing Youths in Lagos State

Our strategies and approaches to policing youths in Lagos have been multifarious in nature. Some of them are:

1. **Core Law Enforcement Approaches:** Core law enforcement approaches to policing youths can be either proactive or reactive in nature. Proactive approaches include strategies such as intelligence gathering on youth groups, continuous profiling of young persons with criminal record, the use of police supervisee system (a system that compels the person under supervision to report daily to a designated police officer who acts as his supervisor for purposes of monitoring and mentoring). On the other hand, reactive approaches include police actions such as arrest, exercise of custodial remedy, investigation and prosecution of offenders. This is designed to serve as deterrent to would-be-offenders and discourage the culture of impunity. The greatest disadvantage of this approach is that it can sometimes become confrontational thereby fanning the ember of hostility and antagonism between the police and the youths.
2. **Enforcement of relevant laws such as Child Rights Law and Children and Young Persons Act:** These are laws that provide for the welfare of young persons and regulate the operation of the criminal justice system in relation to them.
3. **Police-Public Partnership:** This is sometimes known as Police-Citizenship approach. This approach is predicated upon our belief that aggressive law enforcement is just one out many strategies for policing the youths. This is rightly noted by the Attorney General of South Australia, “if we focus too much on locking up young offenders instead of steering them on the right path, we generate more crooks”.

In pursuit of this new paradigm shift, Lagos State Police Command has participated in several workshops, seminars and public discussions where issues of youths, crime and policing were topical. The Command is currently on verge of establishing a Police-Student Forum, an initiative that is aimed at promoting greater cooperation and partnership between the police and young persons in all tertiary institutions across the State.

Similarly, the establishment of Police Human Right Desks and Conflict Resolution Units in all Police Stations within Lagos State is also aimed at encouraging the use of alternative dispute resolution mechanism in resolving disputes amongst citizens as well as between citizens and police officers. This will reduce the use of full coercive powers of the police.

4. The use of other Soft Strategies: As part of efforts to further discourage the use of arrest and other 'hard' police strategies in youth policing, the Command has also developed further soft approaches for tackling social deviance. One of such soft approaches is the use of a popular Television Programme on a local TV Station (MITV) called 'People's Palaver'. Litigants are invited to a live TV Show and encouraged to present their cases to a panel of discussants consisting of a lawyer, a senior police officer, a school teacher, a female community leader and a male community leader. Although the decisions, opinions and advice of the panel are non-binding, litigants have in majority of cases voluntarily implemented their advice and recommendations.

Soft strategies of this nature are usually community oriented, participatory, cheaper, faster and devoid of all forms of unnecessary bureaucracy and restraining power of Force. They are also very strong public relation tools for the police.

5. Encouraging the gradual modification of public places to discourage disorderly congregation and conducts by young people: In Lagos State, this has been one of our most effective tools for policing the youths. The Command working in partnership with the State and Local Governments have strongly encouraged the landscaping, beautification and lightening

up of parks, gardens and street corners. This policy has had the dual advantage of making such places uncomfortable for criminal activities and also providing employment for young persons to take care of the new parks.

6. The use of sports and other extra-curriculum activities: The Nigeria Police Force is known for its special passion and positive disposition to sports. The exploits of its several officers into both national and international sporting events are well documented. It is to the credit of the Force that the only single individual Olympic gold medal ever won by Nigeria was won by a female police officer- Chioma Ajunwa. Others in this category include: Sunday Bada (African record holder in 400 meters), Kikelemo Ajayi (Super Falcons Captain and prolific striker), Samuel Peters (one time world heavy weight boxing champion) and others.

The Nigerian Police, both at the Force Headquarters and Lagos State Command levels has consistently used the invaluable goodwill associated with sports to engender cooperation and compliance from the youths. Some of the police sports events are designed to allow a certain percentage of participation from the civilian population. Examples include the annual Police-People Marathon Race and Commissioner of Police Football Tournament in Lagos.

7. Seeking the support of other credible members of the community in exercising informal control over youths: From time to time, the Command has sort the active support of some credible members of the society in driving home some anti-crime messages, particularly when young people are the target audience of such message. The support of parents, school authorities, traditional rulers, civil right activists, coaches, celebrities (such as musicians and actors), and reputable NGOs, etc have all been enlisted in the past for purposes of informal policing and mentoring of young people.

For example, a popular musician Daddy Showkey has been enlisted severally in the past to moderate in youths-related problems in Ajengunle. Other NGOs such as CLEEN Foundation has also participated in peace

building projects as well as in dispute mediation and resolution meetings involving youths in several parts of the State.

Challenges of Policing the Youths in Lagos

One of the greatest challenges militating against police officers in the effective policing of youths is the strong ‘mutual suspicion’ that exists between police officers and young people. Thus, police contacts with youths are characterized by tensed and vexed issues, with potentials of its degenerating very rapidly. Such attitudinal blockade does neither the police nor the society any good.

Closely related to the above is the usual transfer of aggression on police officers by youths in economically or developmentally disadvantaged areas of the State. Most of these young people see the police institution as the symbol of the government of the day. Thus, deep seated grievances and frustrations arising from governmental failures are usually directly or indirectly thrown at the police. This explains why police officers, police patrol vehicles and sometimes police stations are targets of mob attacks during violent protests and demonstrations, even when the cause(s) of such riots have little or nothing to do with police actions or inactions.

Another challenge is the lack of adequate funding for both enforcement and non-enforcement initiatives of policing young people. As a result, many of such initiatives, no matter how laudable they might be, suffer ‘still birth’ as a result of non-budgetary provisions. Others are poorly or badly executed due to paucity of funds.

In addition poverty, unemployment and the absence of other developmental opportunities are strong criminological factors that predispose young people to crime and exacerbate the problems of youth policing. As aptly noted by the Central Bank Governor Sanusi Lamido in the back page of Punch Newspaper of 5th August 2010, “in Nigeria today, 49.9 percent of the youth between the ages of 15 and 25 are unemployed. That is the blue print for insecurity”.

The challenges of youth policing arising from unemployment and other developmental issues are even more complicated for police officers as they

are issues clearly outside the purview of their control and constitutional responsibilities. For instance, there is very little or nothing the police can do to improve unemployment beyond providing a safe and secured environment for business to thrive.

Other challenges include lack of necessary working tools, appropriate legislation, biased mindset of conservative-minded police officers opposed to the use of soft and non-enforcement initiatives for handling the youths, and many more.

Conclusion

Effective youth policing strategy must be all-compassing. It should involve several responses at several levels, both at the law enforcement level, the family level, the governmental level, the community level and the youth level. Parents, teachers, religious leaders, community leaders and relevant government agencies must be alive to their responsibilities. The police and other law enforcement agencies must also adopt a paradigm shift in policing young people. They must go beyond the use of 'hard' and 'conventional' law enforcement approaches to the use modern, softer, and collaborative and problem-solving approaches.

It is our belief that the adoption of a combination of these approaches will help in lowering youth crimes, juvenile delinquency and other forms of misconducts associated with young people. It may also help in ushering a new era of mutually rewarding and mutually reinforcing relationship between the police and the youths.

These are part of our target objectives.

Police and Youth Relationship: The Perspective of a Community Activist

by

Mr. Aj Dagga Tolar

Introduction

Are there rigid lines or permanent templates from which to examine issues of human relationship, bearing in mind that there is a constant flux and shift in our economic lives, which in turn plays no little role in defining the differences in our beings and classes, which again inputs our characters, behaviours and conduct towards ourselves? The manifestations of our beings to a large extent, have themselves become definitions, super-imposing themselves on our beings and becoming by itself what defines who we are, when in actual fact what defines us better is not merely what we say or do or don't do, but the grand total of our social make-up that in the end defines who we are as human beings for before we were anything, we are first and foremost human beings. This is what allows us to become policemen and women or to be referred to as a youth or whatever categorization we so fall into, and ultimately define the basis of our relationship with each other and with one another.

The challenge that this paper attempts to confront is based on pre-position that there are permanent borderlines that the human mind can't confront, surmount, or reshape to better meet the needs of building a society, where one can be safe and secure. It is from this hope that I commence this discourse in looking at ways to improve the relationship between the youth and police.

Youths and the Nigeria Situation

Young people are one of the most vulnerable groups of human categories given the singular fact that they are still in the process of formation, training and acquiring the skills with which to confront life ahead. However, life does not wait for this training to be completed before confronting them with situations that they are incapable of dealing on their own account.

The responsibility of arming the youth with the necessary tools and skills lies on the whole society and all its institutions in order to perform and provide the necessary training that would allow them to decide and choose rightly. The next question we must answer is how far have we as a society, succeeded in filling the above expectations.

The record before us is one of a dismal failure. A report published by the US based Fund for Peace indicated that Nigeria is listed as the 15th most failed State out of 177 countries listed. Again, a critical analysis of the UTME exams shows another score of failure. Out of 1,276,795 Million candidates who sat for the examination this year, only 200,000 placements were available in all the public and private universities in the country.

UME/UTME EXAMS	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES	POSSIBLE ADMISSION
2008	1,054,043	200,000
2009	1,182,381	200,000
2010	1,276,795	200,000

How do explain the fact that before the examination is written, over 1,000,000 young men & women have been excluded from passing the examination and subsequently denied entry into the Universities? With one million young people denied the right to education in their own country, one begins to appreciate the level of frustration that young people experience in Nigeria. In addition to this is the monstrous evil of unemployment that confronts more than 80% of the 45 million youths in the country. Nigeria also has 92% of the total population living on less than 2 dollars a days. Place side by side with the above is the emerging statistics that Nigeria earned the sum of ₦ 34 trillion on revenue between 1999 and 2009.

This huge sum of money could have served as the basis to build the necessary institutions, road networks, houses, health facilities and communication tools.

It is this damning scenario that defines who a Nigerian is. The same is what determines how we conduct ourselves in relation to others. Our social being is such that if we were all to be replaced by angels who live under the same conditions, the result might not be different. Our “social being” is one being that can only serve to make us inhuman.

What the above implied in relation to our discourse is that young people are faced with extremely difficult situations that require the rest of us to go the extra mile to ensure that they do not become deviants. Even in the midst of all these challenges, the percentage of youth who engage in deviant behaviors and criminal is very negligible. However the police employ the same mental frame work and attitude exhibited to this minimal criminal group of 8% to all other youths. Rather than seeing a young person as innocent, the average police sees him or her as guilty - even before any charge has been brought against him/her. This is one reason why members of the public have negative perception about the police, especially in situations where they constantly extort money from them.

This question of corruption and bribery within the police is so alarming that the Inspector General of Police, Ogbonna Onovo reveals that “the issue of bribery among police officers has reached an alarming level especially as the road blocks are now being mounted for bride collection.” (Guardian, July 16 2010. Pg.7).

Again the United States president, Barrack Obama commented that “you talk to the average person in Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria; they will acknowledge a tragic history in terms of colonialism and negative western influence. But I think what they will also acknowledge is their biggest problem right now is the policeman who’s shaking them down to pay a bribe”.

If IG can be so quoted, with similar statement from United States President, then there is much fact in the statement that the police is of one of the most corrupt public institutions that members of the public have no respect for.

Asking respondents of 50 students from different schools, who among them would want to join the police one could as well guess what the answer would be; no one gave a positive answer. Even in situations where the respondents had family member who were police officials, none wanted to join the force. The major reason was not a question of poor remuneration, but rather bribery and corruption. Although we might not have much difference in responses to a similar questionnaire on teaching career, a major factor for respondents answer will be poor conditions of service.

Ajegunle Incident

The Ajegunle incident in April 2010 leading to the killing of Charles Okafor, came as a result of penchant and greed for money by any means. The storming of a football viewing centre at Yinusa close to Layinka, by gun wielding police officers, resulted in the arrest of 14 youths, excluding Charles Okafor, who had been clubbed and gun butted to the floor in a state of unconsciousness and abandoned to die. The resultant protest by youths made the police to use maximum force to disperse the crowd which subsequently led to the killing of Babatunde Olot. This raises the question of who one complains to when the culprits in question are the police. When esprit de corp comes to the forefront and the police employs everything within its machinery to defend its own.

But is the police one institution that cannot be redeemed and made to function for the interest of the whole of society? Are the police, not also humans? Are they not also affected by the same socio-economic problems that exist in our society?

Nigeria Police Force has records of successful operations in peace keeping missions abroad and has been classified as one of the best. However they have woefully failed in their duties to the citizens of this country which makes their entire work questionable..

As noted by Emeka Aneh, “the Nigeria police is structurally flawed, they are sinfully underpaid, under equipped and undermined by the very people they are suppose to serve”

The Police and Its Own Problems

That Nigeria Police is ill-equipped and its deficiency is not merely a question of tools and gadgets, but that of methodology as well. Police Investigations in most cases are characterized by the three letters 'TTC' - Interrogation, Torture and Confession.

The Ajeunle incident is a typical example of the failure of the Interrogation, Torture and Confession methodology employed by the Police Force as it resulted into torture, violence and lost of human lives. The police must cultivate a new kind of relationship that would allow youth and members of the public to come forward with the necessary cooperation that will make the police to serve the public well.

They must also take it upon themselves to re-orientate their entire work force and operational methodology of 'TTC' to humanness that would put the interest of the youth and the general public first over the greedy drive to make money from any given situation. Such humanness would mean that the police must cross its own borderlines, and develop a social program of interaction with youths and members of the public, to reshape what or who the police are. For example, partnering with community and youth organizations can create a sense of belonging among the youth. The police could play a role in the smooth organization of football competitions and the end of year street jams, instead of just seeing these events as crisis making events. Involvement in issues of concern to youth would help bridge the gap and create the basis by which youth can gradually begin to see the police differently.

They could likewise be trained as counselors to help students in schools look to a future career in the police while engaging in a one day public work in any field will help improve its public image.

Added to the above is the need to open up a permanent communication line that both youths and the police can engage themselves and freely interact so as to dispel the existing stereotypes.

Human Right Desk

There is the need to make the human right desk come alive and be effective. Its functions should be expanded to include existing human right groups and activists in the community that would have the power to perform oversight functions in relation to civil issues and dispute.

It should include the following:

- (1) Carrying out a campaign for bail free in the community.
- (2) Ensuring that no one is detained for 24hrs in the police station without being granted bail or made to face prosecution in the law court.
- (3) Seeing to it that the police go through course that would enable them know the rights of an accused person, and be in a position to educate all accused persons what their right are.

Police Union

When the question of human Right is discussed, the police in most cases are taken for granted. However they themselves are humans and do have rights that they must protect in carrying out their duties.

Most often the general public is only interested in stressing what police duties are, without the corresponding understanding that as humans being and as workers, the police are denied their own human right of belonging to a trade union of their choice.

The long years of military dictatorship has made the police shift from being a civil organization into one that operates with a military mentality. If we want the police to recognize that the masses have human right that need to be respected, the least we need do is to also call and grant the right of the place to a union. This in itself is crucial, for without police union, the legitimate platform to air its concerns and views will be absent.

Conclusion

The police is too deeply rooted in its work to think; it is more of a robotic corps operated from the outside. It has limited power to examine its approach to carrying out operations. Without this understanding, the police will prove

incapable of becoming in tuned with changes associated with modern day policing in relation to its functions; which have direct and overbearing indirect implication to the work of the police

Since the Second World War, the world has moved from keynesianism, to post-keynesianism where the state government has no business in meeting the needs of the working masses. The welfare state is dead, the functions carried by the state has been handed over to private capital which remains primarily driven by the profit motive. This is what has subsequently increased the rate of those living below the poverty line to a higher rate of over 70% in Nigeria.

It is this question of state accountability that we must address, confront, overthrow and replace with a transitional state that will enshrine on its banner the operational philosophy to run society democratically and manage the resources to meet the needs of all, as opposed to the greed for profit by few. This remains the permanent of panacea with which to guarantee the best healthy relationship between the youth and the police and indeed for all groups of people, if our living conditions are such that guarantee the necessary minimal comfort for all.

Young People and the Police in Lagos: Summary of Findings of the Study on Youth-Police Relationship in Lagos

by
Innocent Chukwuma

Introduction

The relationship between young people and the police in many countries of the world has been characterized by mutual suspicion, hostility and sometimes violence. Pressure from members of the public, the media and elites on the police to crack down on crime has often led to disproportionate attention of law enforcement officials on the youth who are perceived to be over represented in crime both as victims and perpetrators. This has led to the use of more aggressive forms of intervention against the youth, which fuels the mutual animosity between them and the police (Alder et.al, 1992).

In Nigeria however, very little data has been collected about the relationship between young people and the police force, with the possible exception of anecdotal reports in newspaper and publications of non-governmental organizations. In response to this situation, the CLEEN Foundation in collaboration with the Lagos State Security trust Fund (LSSTF) carried out a study on young people and the Police in Lagos with the purpose of empirically determining the nature of relationship between the youths and the police in Lagos and to establish the factors that define it as well as recommendations on what could be done by stakeholders on youth and policing to improve it. Respondents to the study were drawn from three local government areas of Lagos State that have contrasting social, economic and demographic characteristics. These are Ajeromi Ifelodun, Surulere and Eti-Osa. Ajeromi Ifelodun is largely a low income area while Surulere and Eti-Osa are medium and high income areas respectively. The three areas also contrast in terms of

population density, crime rates and frequency of skirmishes between the youth and the authority².

The choice of local government areas with contrasting social, economic and demographic characteristics was to determine whether youth attitudes towards the police and policing will be uniform in the three local government areas and if not, to provide explanations for any variations. The respondents comprised in-school and out-of-school youths, police officials, school authorities and community leaders.

This discussion paper presents the summary of findings of the study as well as recommendations by the respondents about what measures could be implemented to address the findings of the study. It is divided into three sections. Section I focuses on youth perceptions of an experience with the police. Section II examines Police perceptions and handling of youth issues. Section 3 presents the conclusions and some of the recommendations of the study.

Youth Perception and Experience with the Police

On youth perception of the police, the study validates existing literature on the subject by indicating a strong suspicion and dislike of the police by young people in Lagos State. When asked about their levels of respect for the police, slightly more than one out of every two respondents (51%) reported little respect for the police and 16% said they have mixed feelings for the police. However, 30.3% said they have great respect for the police. Explaining why majority of them have little respect for the police, a respondent stated: *Instead of protecting (the people), they (police) go against the law*".

When broken down between in-school youths and out-of-school youths, a significant variation emerged. 76 percent of out-of-school youths reported having little respect or mixed feelings towards the police, compared to 60

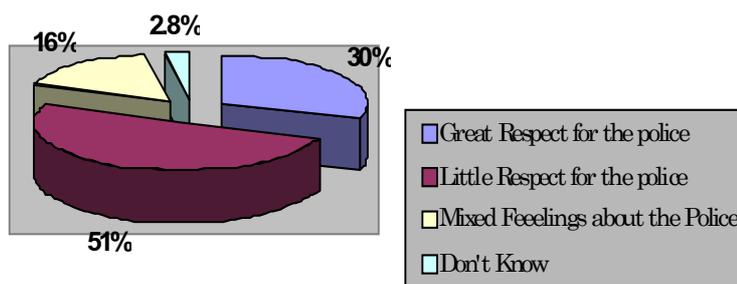
¹Paper presented by Innocent Chukwuma, Executive Director, CLEEN Foundation at inaugural edition of the Youth and Policing Forum in Area B Command, Lagos.² According to the 2006 population census, Ajeromi Ifelodun local government area has a population figure of 687,316; Surulere as 502,865 and Eti-Osa has 283,791.

percent of in-school youths. This is not surprising, given that out-of-school youths are more likely to have more negative contact with the police than in-school youths. Interestingly however, when these figures are broken down into Local Government Areas, the responses show no significant differences between the high density, low density, and medium density communities, in regard to levels of respect for the police. This could be a result of higher proportion of respondents for this particular study attending school in the high density neighborhood.

When analyzed to examine the impact of gender on young people’s respect for the police, it was found that 27 percent of females surveyed have great respect for the police, compared to 33 percent of males.

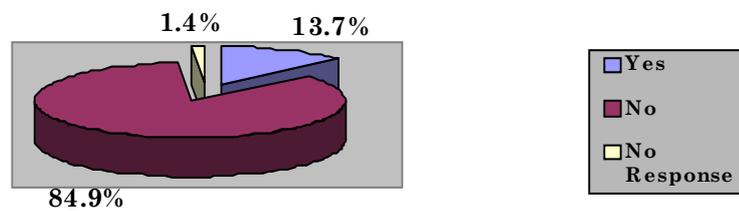
Fig: How Much Respect Respondents have for the Police based on What the Youths Know of how they do their jobs

Fig How Much Respect Respondents Have for the Police based on what the Know of how they do their jobs



Data from the study revealed that only 49 respondents or 13.7% of the youth polled had asked the police for help, while the vast majority (303 or 84.9%) had never done so. These low numbers can be explained by the negative perceptions of the police by most young people, and a fundamental lack of trust that has developed over the years. Young people do not believe that the police will be of assistance to them.

Fig : Whether Respondents Have Ever Asked Police for Help

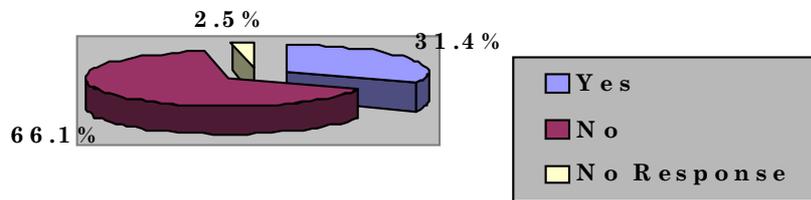


Data showed a positive variation when compared across local government areas in terms of the proportion of respondents who ever asked the police for help. In Ajeromi-Ifelodun local government area, which is low income and high density, 8.9% of the respondents had asked the police for help in the past year. The figures for Surulere, which is a medium income and medium density area, and Eti-Osa which is a high income and low density area are 12.6% and 20.3%, respectively. These findings support findings from the US and Europe, which asserts that youths in higher income areas tend to bestow more legitimacy on the police than those in low income areas, thus making them more likely to seek help. In high crime, low income areas, young people often blame the poor conditions on police incompetence and failure to deal with crime effectively. Therefore, they do not view the police as a viable option to turn to in times of distress (Leiber et al. 1998; Resig and Parks 2000; Sims et al. 2002; Taylor et al. 2001; Williams 1999).

A total of 348 of the respondents volunteered information on whether they have ever been stopped by the police over the past twelve months. 31.4% responded in the affirmative while 236 or 66.1% reported that they have not been stopped by the police before.

Fig: Whether Respondents Have Ever Been Stopped by the Police

Fig : Whether Respondents Have Ever Been Stopped by the Police



The sheer number of young people stopped by the police is striking. Youths tend to spend a lot of time in public spaces, which increases the likelihood that they will encounter the police. It also increases the likelihood that they will be victims of violent crime or property crime. When police initiate the contact with juveniles, Hinds suggests that it's more likely that the contact will be viewed as negative by the youth. With more than 31 percent of respondents stopped by the police, there is a risk that a large proportion of these encounters are fomenting negative attitudes (Hinds 2007).

Looking at those youths taken to the police station, only 32 percent of respondents said that they believed they were treated fairly while in custody, as opposed to 38 percent who said they were treated unfairly and another 30 percent claiming they were treated very unfairly. Of those respondents who claimed they were treated unfairly or very unfairly, 56 percent view the police with little respect and 14 percent have mixed feelings about the police. This data supports the theory that negative experiences with the police lead to negative attitudes towards the police and their overall legitimacy, supporting the ideas brought forward by researchers like Griffiths and Winfree (1982), Hurst and Frank (2000), and Janeksela (1999). One female respondent provided a chilling account of a negative experience that permanently altered her attitude towards the police:

“I remember when my father had a police case; a D.P.O. that was supposed to help us was trying to have contact with me and my elder sister that before he will help my father he is going to make love to us so we rejected it”.

Furthermore, when looking at the attitudes of those young people who witnessed poor treatment of their peers by the police, a similar pattern emerges. Of those respondents who witnessed the police treating other juveniles poorly, 52 percent viewed the police with little respect and 18 percent had mixed feelings. This validates the idea that young people who have witnessed mistreatment of their peers by the police will also view the police in an unfavorable light.

On what could be done to improve their perception of the police, 82.5% strongly agreed that “the police need more training in dealing with young people”. The responses to this and other statements show that youths hold a strong perception that police are not properly equipped to respond to their needs and concerns, that they are essentially out of touch. They also suggested establishment of a special unit made of trained officials to deal with issues involving young people.

Police Perception and Handling of Youth Issues

On police perception and handling of youth issues, the study revealed as expected, that the distrust and hostility young people have against them is mutual. In this section, we will examine how police perceptions impact their behavior towards young people.

In the survey, when asked whether they found young people difficult to deal with, 63 percent of respondents answered in the affirmative.

Table 5.1: Do you find young people difficult to deal with?

	Frequency	Percentage
YES	75	63.0
NO	43	36.1
NO RESPONSE	1	0.8
TOTAL	119	100

When asked why this is so, 37 percent of respondents said it was because youths are disrespectful, 16 percent because they are unruly, and 23.5 percent because they are violent. Clearly, police view many young people as potential criminal threat and often treat them as such. One police officer, in an in depth interview, stated, “most of the crime being committed in our society is being committed by the active segment of the society, those between the age of 16 to 40.

Table 5.2: If yes, why is this so?

	Frequency	Percent
Valid UNRULY	19	16.0
VIOLENT	28	23.5
DISRESPECTFUL	44	37
INTELLIGENT	4	3.4
EXPOSED TO FOREIGN INFLUENCE	13	10.9

When we cross tabulate the data on police views towards young people with the socioeconomic environment where police work, the attitudes become more sharpened. While 54.5 percent of police who describe their work environment as low density neighborhoods find young people difficult to deal with, that number jumps to 64 percent in medium and high density neighborhoods. Police working in slums encounter more young criminals than those in affluent neighborhoods. As a result, they are more prone to view young people as a criminal threat and difficult to deal with. Experiences with Area Boys and gangs in these poor neighborhoods exacerbate those perceptions. Although the criminal elements are only a fraction of the total youth population, these experiences help foster a blanket view of young people as trouble among the police.

Lack of training on how to deal with young people makes the problem worse. When asked about whether they have received in service training on how to deal with young people, only 28 percent of respondents replied in the affirmative, while 68 percent admitted that they had received no formal training. Of those who received training, 56 percent found young people difficult to deal with, compared to 69 percent of those who did not receive the training. Clearly, exposure to the issues facing youths and learning constructive methods of communication with juveniles positively impacts the way police view them. The need for training is further highlighted by the responses to a question asked about the main problems in police-youth relations. The most common response, from 42 percent of respondents, was misunderstanding.

Table 5.3: What do you think are the main problems in police-youth relations today?

	RESPONSES	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
MISUNDER- STANDING	49(41.2%)	70(58.8%)	119(100%)
DISOBIDENCE	49(41.2%)	70(58.8%)	119(100%)

INADEQUATE TRAINING	6(5.0%)	113(95.4%)	119(100%)
VIOLENCE AMONG YOUTHS	9(7.6%)	110(92.4%)	119(100%)
YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT	31(26.1%)	88(73.9%)	119(100%)
LACK OF EDUCATION ON THE PART OF THE YOUTH	30(25.2%)	89(74.8%)	119(100%)

Misunderstanding breeds mutual suspicion, and ultimately, hostility on both sides. Training that deals with some of the issues that engender misunderstanding is crucial to improving the relationship.

Turning towards police views on the use of force on young people, the police themselves admit that too much physical force is used on juveniles. 62 percent of respondents said that some police officers use too much force on young people.

Table 5.4: Do you think some police officers use too much force in dealing with young people?

	Frequency	Percentage
YES	74	62.2%
NO	42	35.3%
NO RESPONSE	3	2.5%
TOTAL	119	100%

While readily acknowledging that their colleagues too often abuse their power in their interactions with youths, their responses also reveal a skewed impression of when the utilization of force is necessary. Nearly 50 percent of respondents said that they had found it necessary to use force on a young person in the past year. When asked why, 16 percent claimed it was because they were disobedient and almost 12 percent claimed it was because they refused to answer. For the most part, these are not behaviors that necessitate the use of force on the part of police, yet police officers saw it differently. One respondent from the in depth interviews, when asked about the use of force, says “it is only when we have people that are hardened that we use minimal force”.

Table 5.5: Why did you have to apply force on a young person?

	RESPONSES	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
UNRULY	(14)11.9%	105(88.1%)	119(100%)
DISOBIDENT	19(16.0%)	100(84.0%)	119(100%)
VIOLENT	31(26.0%)	88(74.0%)	119(100%)
REFUSE TO ANSWER	14(11.8%)	105(88.2%)	119(100%)
RESISTED ARRESTED	21(17.6%)	98(82.4%)	119(100%)

The unnecessary use of force is largely a result of the broad perception of youth criminality discussed above. In thinking that juveniles pose a threat, police are more likely to overreact and abuse their power. This contributes to the perception among youths that they are treated unfairly and with hostility by the police.

Certainly, there are real crimes committed by youths and real bad behavior by young people that contributes to this attitude among the police. Nearly 74 percent of respondents believe that very few young people that they contact have respect for authority and the police.

Table 5.6: How many young people that you come in contact with have respect for authority, particularly the police?

	Frequency	Percentage
VERY FEW	29	24.4
A FEW	62	52.1
ABOUT HALF	4	3.4
MOST	15	12.6
NEARLY ALL	8	6.7
NO RESPONSE	1	0.8
TOTAL	119	100

The negative nature of encounters between young people and the police exacerbates the already strained relationship, and leads to some of the poor treatment already mentioned. Part of the reason for this is because there is very little contact with police ever initiated by young people. In the survey of youths discussed in the previous section, the vast majority never went to the police for help or initiated contact. A contact that is initiated by a young person is much more likely to be positive in nature. Almost all interactions are initiated by the police, making it more likely that the encounter is based on suspicions of wrong doing. The likelihood that the encounter is going to be hostile is clearly greater when there is police discipline involved. Because they spend the majority of their time dealing with youths who may be causing trouble, rather than the youth population as a whole, police have developed negative perceptions that youths often harass them and show little respect. This supports the literature asserting that the negative nature of police encounters with youths often lead to a suspicion of criminality among youths in general, and a negative overall attitude (Hinds 2007).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has revealed that the majority of interactions between juveniles and the police take place in a law enforcement capacity. Interactions within this sphere are bound to be hostile and rife with suspicion. Young people distrust the police enough to avoid seeking their assistance, often limiting police contacts to these negative encounters. Because police experience limited positive contacts with youths, a stereotypical attitude that views juveniles as troublemakers and potential criminals has emerged. Young people, because their encounters with police almost always involve interrogation and suspicion from the authority figures, feel persecuted and abused by law enforcement. These attitudes are likely to be more prevalent in low income communities, where crime rates are higher and the threat of criminal activity raises tensions and increases distrust between police and youths. The mutual suspicion decreases the likelihood that young people will go to the police for help and also decreases the possibility that they will cooperate with the police. The following recommendations should be implemented to improve the relationship between the police and young people:

- A special unit trained to deal with young people will foster better relationships by initiating more positive interactions. They will also participate in more constructive engagements, such as crime prevention workshops at schools. Officers in the unit will better understand youth culture and youth perspectives to prevent many of the misunderstandings that often lead to conflict. Through positive police-youth contacts, we can begin to mitigate the unhealthy cycle of mistrust and suspicion that defines the current relationship.
- Youth and police forums can provide a healthy environment for both the police and young people to address grievances. Through dialogue, greater understanding can be reached and ideas for improving youth-police relationships can be brought forward. Problems can be addressed and possible solutions can be discussed. A constructive dialogue will emerge that will improve the quality of youth-police contacts, as well as contributing strategies to enhance the quality of contacts when

police officers are out on the beat and youths are occupying public spaces.

- Additionally, the problem of youth-police hostility should be looked at through a broader societal lens. There are a number of socioeconomic factors that lead to youth vagrancy and disillusionment, which fuels hostile relations between the two camps. Poor education and lack of economic opportunities leave many young people marginalized. Feeling unrepresented politically, many youths drift through their adolescence and become vulnerable to conflict with law enforcement. There are several educational, economic, and political remedies which the Lagos State government should look to implement in order to improve relations between youths and the police.

Educational Solutions:

- Prioritize technical education in secondary schools by reviving old and establishing new technical colleges in all states of the federation in order to equip young people with the skill sets and competencies that would enable them to be meaningfully engaged after graduation.
- Establish skill acquisition and vocational education centers across the states to equip young people who are not able to go to tertiary institutions with artisan skills that would enable them to establish small businesses of their own instead of engaging in endless search for non-existent jobs. This would promote artisanship as a foundation for the development of the productive base of our economy and should be encouraged.
- Carry out a fundamental review of curricula used in schools from primary to tertiary institutions in Nigeria in order to make them more responsive to manpower needs of Nigeria in the 21st century.

Economic Solutions:

- Government should encourage financial institutions to give more start up credits to young business people by relaxing the stringent collateral

facilities required before loans can be granted and focus more on financing sound business plans and ideas.

- Manpower needs audits should be conducted by federal and state governments in order to identify skill set areas where more young people are needed and areas where we have surplus for outsourcing. This would enable the targeting of resources to areas where more qualified young people are needed and areas that we need to promote for overseas jobs through economic diplomacy.

Political Solutions:

- The vote of the electorate must count so that only people who won through the ballot can be entrusted to political positions.
- Laws and policies that impede the aspiration of young people to highest positions of political authority need to be reviewed.

Through dialogue and increased mutual understanding, much of the hostility between police and young people can be mitigated. A stronger relationship between the two stakeholders will mean that young people will be more likely to report crimes and ask for help when its needed, less likely to commit criminal offences, and more likely to cooperate when questioned by the police. The police will be less likely to abuse or harass youths and will benefit from increased cooperation. If the proper steps are taken, the relationship can and will improve for the better.

Appendix

COMMUNIQUÉ

Lagos Youth and Policing Summit Organized by CLEEN Foundation in Collaboration with the Lagos State Police Command and Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF) at Airport Hotel, Lagos on August 10, 2010

Against the background of enormous brutalities, conflicts, destruction of properties and human lives resulting from police youth confrontation in Lagos State, and the need for collaboration to foster improved relationship between the police and youth, CLEEN Foundation, Lagos State Police Command, Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF), Civil Society Organizations, youth leaders and the media gathered in a summit on August 10, 2010 to deliberate on effective measures of enhancing the relationship between the police and youth in Lagos State and adopted the following Communiqué:

Reconfirming our common commitment and shared responsibility of ensuring the security and welfare of the youth, and protection of human lives and property;

Acknowledging that police-youth relationship has been characterized by mutual suspicions;

Recognizing that poor relationship between the police and the youth coupled with the unruly behaviours of youth and excessive use of power by the police has resulted to the destruction of properties and the loss of innocent lives;

Mindful that the hostile police-youth relationship is plagued by several other problems including unemployment, broken homes, bribery and corruption of the police, abuse of power by the police, illiteracy, lack of education, poverty;

Conscious of the need to collaborate and foster a cordial relationship between the police and the youth, identified the blockages that hinder a cordial relationship between police and youths in Lagos State:

Hereby decide and agree on the following recommendations to various stakeholders and institutions in order to improve the relationship between the police and youth.

Federal Government should:

- Increase the remuneration of police to decrease corruption
- Provide employment and social benefit opportunities for the youth
- Equip the educational system and provide funding to accommodate all qualified students
- Include civic education in the school curriculums
- Establish and implement appropriate minimum wages for all
- Increase the educational budget to 26% as recommended by United Nations
- Effectively implement rule of law
- Effectively govern the city and provide social amenities such as electricity, water, health services and education.

Lagos State Security Trust Fund Should:

- Establish a common definition of safety and security between the police and youths
- Sensitize the youth on common security tips
- Provide and maintain a reliable help line for security reasons.

Lagos State Police Command should:

- Train police to improve their communication, public relations and skills in handling youths
- Carry out effective intelligence investigations
- Form effective disciplinary measures within the police force
- Create dedicated phone lines and complaint box for the public
- Publicize disciplinary actions against the police

- Form accountability and transparency mechanisms in investigations
- Form police unions to averse the welfare of police
- Participate in youthful activities such as carnivals and festivals to promote familiarity and friendliness.

Youth Groups and Leaders should:

- Organize youth associations in collaborate with the police to sensitize youth to prevent unnecessary police interventions.

Civil Society Organizations should:

- Educate the public on their rights and limitations stipulated in the law
- Sensitize the youth to abstain from being used as political tools
- Educate the youth on cultural and religious values
- Constantly organize police-youth forums.

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