

JOHN PAUL II JUSTICE AND PEACE CENTRE



A Monitoring survey report on the police - community
relationship:

Clock tower police post

May 2014

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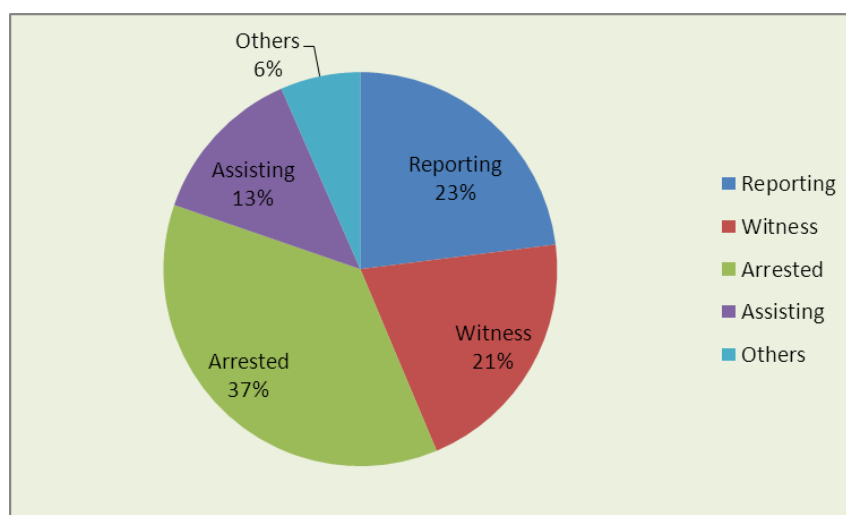
Introduction

Following the baseline survey that was conducted by JPIIJPC to assess the relationship between the clock tower police and the community it serves, JPIIJPC subsequently initiated interventions such as training police officers on verbal judo and the police – community dialogue meetings to improve the relationship. In order to monitor the extent to which these interventions had realized impact, JPIIJPC conducted this follow up survey in May 2014. The monitoring survey was conducted in all the 8 zones served by clock tower .i.e. Katwe West, Byuma, Base, Kevina, Kiganda, Katenda, Tawo and Central zone. 213 youth, women, men from the community and community leaders like LCs, the parish counsellor, youth leaders and crime preventers were interviewed about their relationship with the police officers and the police officers’ conduct while interacting with civilians. The local leaders in the 8 zones were very instrumental in identifying community members who had interacted with the police. 6 police officers from clock tower who had participated in the baseline survey, the trainings and the dialogue meetings were also interviewed using a one on one questionnaire to assess whether they have noticed any improvement in police officer’s competence, behavior, interaction and treatment of civilians, and corruption. These were police constables, interacting with citizens on a daily basis and had all served at clock tower for more than 6 months.

Interaction of the police officers with the community members

The majority 99 % (210/213) of the interviewed respondents had interacted with the police officers, mostly from clock tower police post. Only 1% (3/213) had never interacted with the police.

Figure 1: Avenues of interaction between the police officers and the community

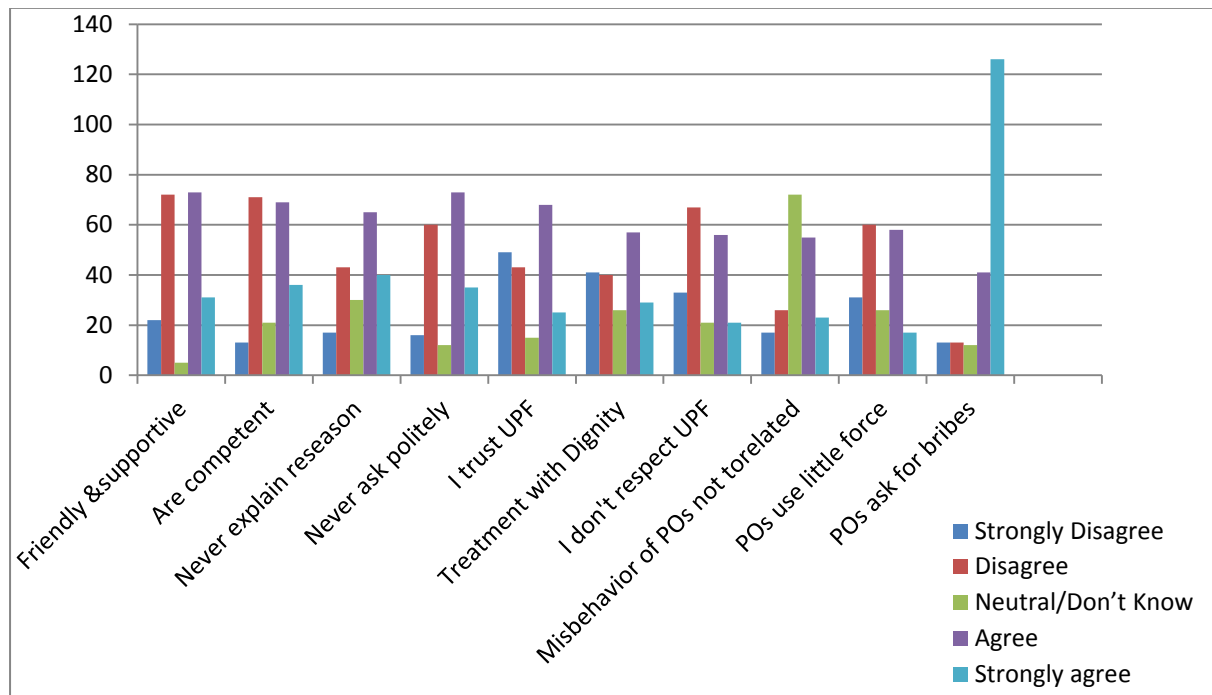


Majority of the community members interacted with the police during arrest. Others interacted with the police while reporting theft of property, a crime, a lost sim card or other cases and to recover confiscated property. Some went to the station as witnesses, or assisting a friend/relative who had been arrested. The rest categorized as “others” were community

local leaders and crime preventers who often help community members to report issues affecting them, helping those arrested, besides identifying criminals and referring cases.

Findings

Figure 2; Community members’ perception of their relationship with the police



1.1.1. Competence and Professionalism of the police officers at clock tower

More than half of the community members accredited most of the police officers at clock tower for; being friendly and supportive, always explaining reasons for stopping or arresting people, generally appearing competent and knowing what to do in a given situation. A good number of community members also agreed that most police officers ask politely rather than giving orders, are no longer too aggressive and treat people with respect depending on the situation and the behaviour of the person being arresting.

“They are professional! they explained to me the reason as to why they arrested me”One of the community members in Central Zone.

“They are competent since they helped me to arrest the person who destroyed my property”One of the respondents from Kevina.

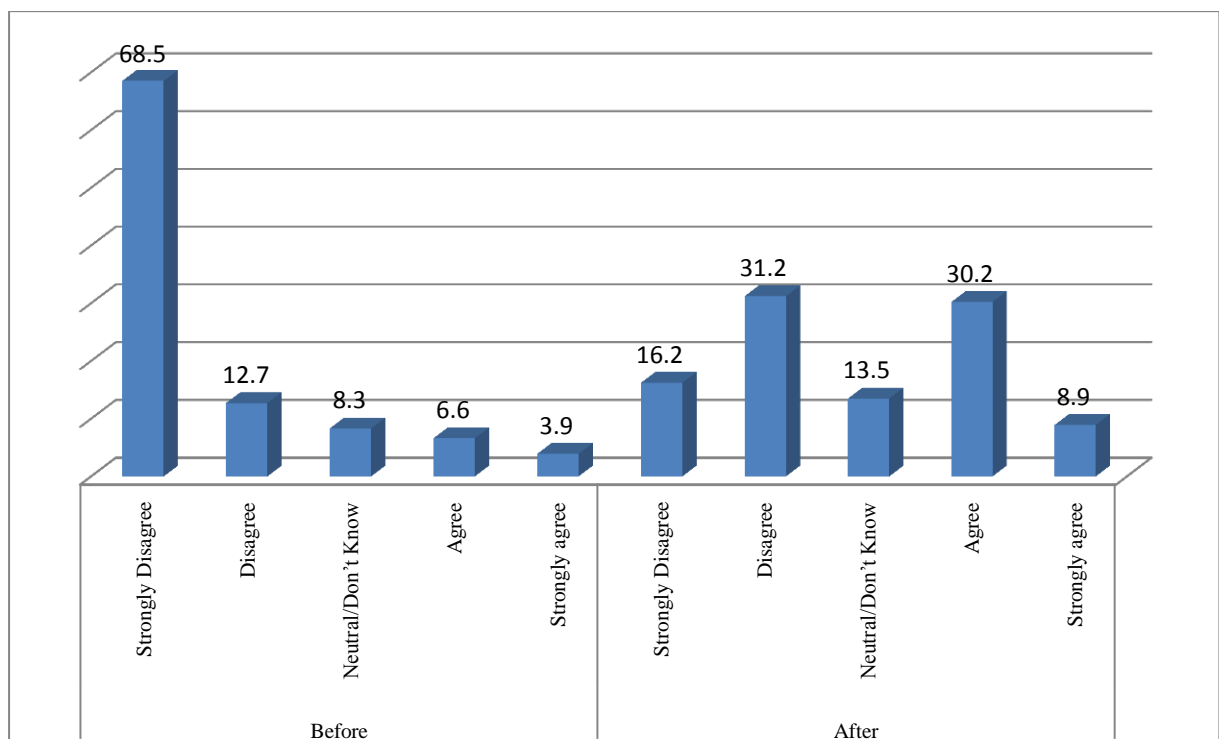
“They are friendly and supportive because helped me to stop misusing drugs” One of the respondents in Tawo Zone.

It was also reported that most police officers now cooperate with the LCs and most respond to situations when needed. This compared to the baseline survey findings reveals that there is a remarkable improvement in the relationship. Some of the respondents from the communities however noted that there some few police officers who were still acting unprofessionally; behaving rudely and not supportive especially the ones who do night patrols and who don't wear

uniforms, or whose uniforms don't bear name tags and yet they arrest civilians without a warrant. A few still arrest suspects without informing them the reason for arrest, still indiscriminately arrest people, don't detain some suspects for the recommended time, extort money from suspects and only help those with money. Some still irresponsibly interact with the community members. It was claimed that some even have a good relationship with some criminals because they notify the criminals when a patrol is yet to take place so that the criminals hide, and other officers unknowingly end up arresting only innocent people. Some don't return confiscated items during arrest and detention, others still respond sluggishly to work and mismanage some cases.

1.1.2. The use of force

Figure 3: Comparison of the use of force before and after the intervention



The community members were asked whether police officers use as little force as possible.

During the baseline survey, 81.2%¹ asserted that there was excessive use of force, 8.3% were neutral while only 10.5%² agreed that police officers use reasonable force. After the interventions, the monitoring survey now reveals that only 47.4% were of the opinion that police uses excessive force, 13.5% were neutral while 39.1% reported that police uses as little force as possible. This implies that most police officers no longer use too much force when arresting civilians. A good number of them emphasized that the type of force used depended on the behaviour and type of reaction of the person being arrested.

“It depends on the person they are arresting; some of our colleagues are militant and provoke them” A respondent from Base Zone.

¹ Sum of respondents who disagreed/strongly disagreed that police officers use as little force as possible before interventions

² Sum of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed that police officers use as little force as possible before interventions

“Base has many criminals so police must use force to deal with some criminals.”..... A respondent from Base Zone.

“He used force on me because I resisted since he was in rare clothes and without a warrant of arrest” A respondent from Tawo Zone.

“The force they use is little compared to last year but there some community members forcing them to use force”A respondent from Kevina.

This was reaffirmed by the police officers themselves.

“If the suspect is not aggressive, we don’t use any force” “Except a few with capital offenses who deny their offences and may want to fight during arrest.”

“When we go to arrest someone and he/she resists, we use some reasonable force” “Sometimes we use pepper spray to make the person succumb”

Police officers.

However, some of the respondents claimed to have been handled with excessive force or to have witnessed a community member being handled with excessive force. Some indeed affirmed that even if some suspects convince some police officers to allow them walk gently to the station, they don’t agree, they hand cuff the suspects and pull their trousers. Although there were instances where police officers were still using excessive force, it should also be noted that some community members had also not changed their perception towards the police since they were still reporting on past events some of which happened before the interventions. The excessive use of force was mostly pronounced in some of the zones namely Kiganda, Tawo, and Byuma. These are the same zones that were reported to be having many other police officers from other stations other than clock tower operating there. Some respondents would not easily differentiate the officers of clock tower from the others. Most community members lamented about the excessive use of force by police officers;

“Last month, they arrested my son at Tawo in the night, and then requested him to give them money. He was given 2 hot slaps and even bitten up by their dogs. When we went to report them at the station, they claimed the police officers were from another station and did not help us at all! A respondent from Byuma.

“Several youths have been severely beaten by police officers but we are not sure whether they are specifically from Clock tower” A respondent from Kiganda.

“A certain youth was pleading with them to at least take him and detain him instead of torturing him. When he fell down, he was beaten up until he became too weak to walk, they then lifted him and took him on the 999 vehicle.”A respondent from Byuma.

“While arresting me, I was kicked, pushed and slapped on the back” A respondent from Central Zone.

“My son was arrested when he was going to buy a chapati. They undressed him, beat him up and a bullet was even shot. I think these officers were from Katwe, but I found my file at Clock tower”. A respondent from Tawo Zone.

“They severely beat up my son and when they realized that he was very weak, he was left to take himself for treatment. This is might be Kibuye police!” A respondent from Tawo Zone.

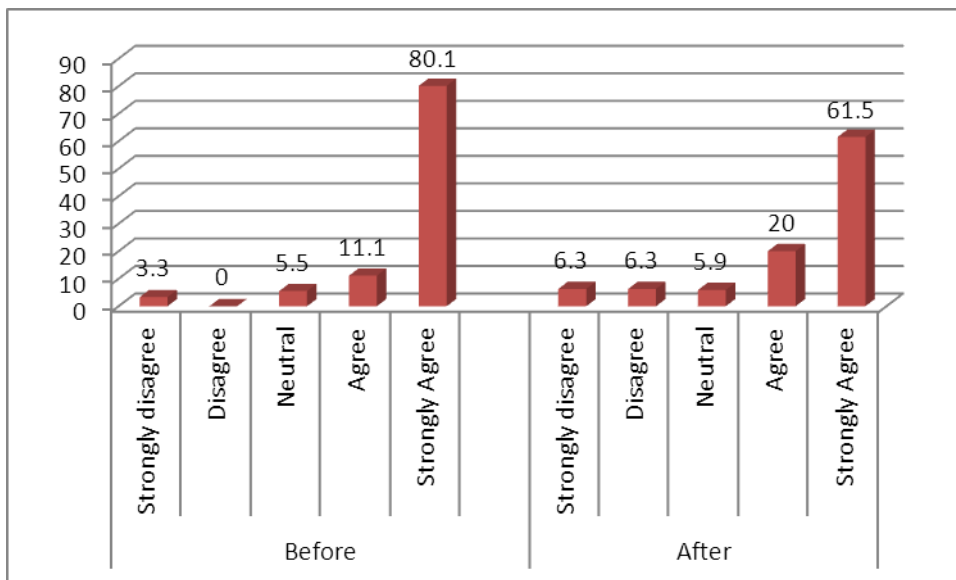
“They use a lot of force when arresting the poor and use little when arresting the rich”A respondent from Tawo Zone.

The increased number of reported cases of use of force in some zones might be attributed to police officers from other stations. Some of the respondents who would specifically differentiate clock tower police officers from those of other zones all noted that there is a tremendous change in the way they treat community members compared to other officers.

1.1.3. Corruption

During the baseline survey, corruption was also identified as one of the major causes of the poor relationship between the community and clock tower police. Although corruption rates reduced according to the monitoring, (See figure 4 below) the rate of reduction was minimal.

Figure 4: The rate of bribery and corruption before and after the intervention



The community members were asked whether police officers ask for bribes and demand money for services.

Most of the respondents from the community claimed that corruption among the police officers of clock tower is still high. Of the 81.5% who agreed or strongly agreed that corruption is high, 63.4% confessed to been directly asked for a bribe or witnessed someone in their area being asked for a bribe. Whenever anyone goes to report a case, he/she is requested to pay some money for a reference letter or transport. Most of them paid in a range of 5,000/= to 50,000/=. *When you reach the counter, they immediately ask whether you have fuel. A poor person cannot be helped! Lamented a community member from Base Zone.* The majority who were arrested claimed to have been asked to pay some money so that they can be released. In the process of arrest and detention, some community members claimed that some officers forcefully took their money as one lamented; *“They took my money! I gave them 5,000/= then they told me to make 10,000/=. Then they checked in my pocket and took all that I had!”* There were some respondents though few who reported to have paid as much as 100,000 to 400,000/= to be released, depending on the type of case.

The survey revealed that there are some community members who also initiate the bribing of the officers, mostly those who want their suspects to be released immediately. The vice of bribery is deeply rooted in the communities that some community members think that they must pay the police officers in order to be helped. Other respondents claimed that the money they give the officers is for sympathy since the officers are poorly remunerated yet they are helpful to the community whereas others offered the money to the officers as an appreciation. *“It is I who gave them money to appreciate their work” ... A respondent from Base Zone.*
“It is us who usually give them some money to help them because we know they need it greatly” A community member from Katwe West.

“When they asked for money the first time, I learnt that every time I interact with them, I must go with some money and give them before I ask for any help. A community member from Byuma Zone. ...

1.2. General overview of performance after intervention

Majority of the respondents reported that there was a general improvement in the relationship since 57% of those who had interacted with the police noted that they had been treated well, better than before mostly with regard to the way the police officers interact and use of force during arrest. They also noted an increased collaboration with the communities in identifying criminals leading to reduced indiscriminate arrests, increased arrest of criminals and reduced crime rate. This was mostly pronounced in four zones namely Katwe West, Central, Kevina and Base zones.

“The crime rate has reduced! The police now give you a chance to negotiate with the person you have an issue with before they take you to court” Central zone.

“I work here and stay in Nansana. They used to arbitrarily arrest us. I would be stopped about 3 times and money extorted from me. Of recent, this is no longer common.” A respondent from Central Zone.

“The change is good because they have helped us to arrest wrong doers. There is a big change because they respect our leaders and us too”A respondent from Kevina Zone.

“They no longer treat people very badly as they used to. I collaborate with them now and they are very friendly, they don’t use force and are no longer rude”.A respondent from Kevina Zone.

“I’m a prostitute, last night I arrived at 2:00 pm. I walked safely, they did not arrest me for nothing as they used to, and they are very good!A respondent from Kiganda Zone.

“They no longer indiscriminately arrest us, there is a lot of change in our area and I thank you very much, continue to educate them...!” A respondent from Kevina.

“We used to go to the villages and they abuse us, even stone us, but now, they no longer stone us! The communities are friendly..... A police officer from Clock tower.

“Since I work as a detective, I arrested 3 suspects with no resistance. We have a good relationship with the community members”..... Another police officer

“We no longer use weapons like guns while going for arrests. We used to use even batons and tear gas. But now, we don’t. We just talk to them and arrest them professionally.”The new tactics have helped me to improve my communication skills.....Another police officer from Clock tower.

“When we go to the communities, people tell us these days that we are good! We learnt how to handle people. Before the training, police officers used to chain suspects but these days they do not. The way we talk is also good”.....Police officers from clock Tower.

These findings compared to the baseline survey findings show that there is a great improvement. There were several positive comments on police during the monitoring. However, crime rate and thieves were still reported high in some zones like in Kiganda within the last 6 months. Also, although indiscriminate arrests were no longer rampant in the zones, the police patrol was reported to also have developed a tendency of rounding up all idle youths (whether criminals or innocent) in the zones specifically after a capital offence has been committed in one of the zones. Some respondents also claimed that some of their cases were still being mismanaged; as one respondent in Katenda Zone lamented with evidence; *“My case ref: 29/29/01/2014, offense: assault, Suspects - Lwasa, Mubiru and Amuza, Kamada Bugali was mismanaged at clock tower station then I transferred the case to another station”.....A community member from Kiganda Zone.*

1.3. Discussion and Conclusion

Clock tower police post officers must be accredited for their efforts of providing security and keeping law and order in the eight zones they serve. Nearly half of the community members who interacted with the officers felt treated with dignity and respect, and in turn still respect and trust the police compared to only the quarter noted during the baseline. The reduction in the complaints received by the police officers from the community members against UPF reaffirms this. As a result, the numbers of people served by Clock tower police post increased respect and trust for police officers. These findings reveal that the competence and professionalization of clock tower police post officers has improved. Likewise some community members are becoming civil. Despite some of the challenges noted above, the police officers strongly believe that their reputation is good and they generally perceive their relationship with the community to have improved as the community members even help them with information. The implemented strategies by JPIIJC and the police management have greatly contributed to their professionalism and improving the relationship, police image and public trust. The strategies also contributed to community’s vigilance, responsiveness to security needs and also strengthened community policing due to increased collaboration with the local leaders. This has resulted into more criminals arrested, less indiscriminate arrests and reduced crime rate in some zones. Notwithstanding these achievements, recognizing the few shortcomings like bribery and mismanagement of cases, lack of police officers’ confidentiality on the identity of community members who avail information, not presuming innocence of suspects until proven guilty still need to be improved. More strategies to supplement the initial efforts suggested include; more community dialogues and more refresher courses for the police officers, besides also involving police officers from other stations who also operate in some of the zones.

Recommendations to the police post and stakeholders

There is need for more community dialogues with the entire population in the zones to improve community awareness. All the local leaders and a small portion of the public were already engaged in police - community dialogues on public civility, security, roles of police, rights and duties and the results were remarkable. There is need to target a broader spectrum.

There is still need to also;

- Conduct a few more refresher trainings of the junior police officers.
- Continuous engagement of the community members to increase their vigilance against corrupt police officers.
- Enforcement of the Police Act to minimize the rampant corruption in the Force.