

How to guide:

Leadership Meetings for External Oversight Agencies
AND
Quarterly Meetings with the Police, Oversight Agencies
and Civil Society Organisations

What is the J4A ‘How to’ series?

The guide is part of a series of products developed by J4A to communicate lessons learned from projects and pilots, to provide stakeholders with guidance on how to adapt and replicate the initiative in their own context.

Who is this ‘How to’ guide for?

Influencers and decision makers in the justice sector (police, prisons, judiciary and civil society).

Reference tools

Accompanying reference tools are available at www.j4a-nigeria.org or by request from info@j4a-nigeria.org

SECTION 1: Leadership Meetings for External Oversight Agencies

The problem

- Accountability is one of the challenges faced in Nigeria since the return to democracy. For the Police, different external oversight agencies have been set up to enhance effective police accountability.
- The oversight agencies have broad mandates, but rarely collaborated with each to harness effective service delivery.
- Referral of complaints was inevitable, yet lack of coordination among the oversight agencies was a challenge for progressive result.

Background

The concept of accountability in the Nigeria society is a growing phenomenon that has from time desired more efforts with little results to show. The 1999 Constitution created the Police Service Commission with the power *“to appoint and exercise disciplinary control on officers of the Nigeria Police Force save the Inspector General of Police.”* The Public Complaints Commission which pre-dates the 1999 Constitution was established in 1975 with wide mandates *“to inquire into complaints by members of the public concerning the administrative action of any public authority and companies or their officials....”* The National Human Rights Commission was established in 1995 with the mandate to protect and promote human rights in furtherance of the constitutional and international human rights.

These agencies have broad and sometimes overlapping mandates and as such the need for collaboration and support from each other cannot be overemphasized. However, during the scoping for the Justice for All Programme, it was understood that there is a lack of effective collaboration between the police oversight agencies, which inhibits service delivery by the agencies.

What you can do

Initiating a leadership engagement platform can serve to breach the gap on ineffective collaboration between oversight agencies. This forum brings together chief executives of the agencies with the aim of sharing experiences to leverage on ways of synergizing working relations to improve police accountability. It is advisable to organise the program outside the location of the chief executives to ensure effective concentration during such meetings.

What you can achieve

- Improved coordination between oversight agencies for effective service delivery
- Enhanced referral of cases between agencies which can contribute to speedy determination of complaints and inevitably victim's satisfaction
- Improved collaboration between agencies on external programs that promote their mandates

Leadership Meetings: Steps for Implementation

Organising meetings between Leadership of police oversight agencies is relevant in harnessing operational activities and building relations for better police accountability.

1. Submit letters of collaboration and introduction of project to oversight agencies, and request to meet with leadership to discuss on the project;
2. Meet with leadership of agencies independently and discuss project objectives and role of the relevant agency in the project; here, request for assignment of organisational focal person on project;
3. Organise a meeting to plan for Leadership meeting of oversight agencies always being mindful of project work-plan and objective of activity;
4. At meeting, plan for Leaders including their itinerary of accompanying staff e.g. driver, security detail, personal assistant (a minimum of 3 but not more than 4);
5. Identify suitable location and venue (i.e. state within a particular region) and justify reason for choice of state (e.g. more secured environment);
6. Select suitable date for event and reserve venue;
7. Communicate date, venue and event to oversight agencies and solicit confirmation of their availability;
8. Follow-up with organisational focal person to ensure the event is attended by Leadership;
9. Develop an agenda and submit to oversight agencies for information and possible suggestions;
10. As technical person or organisation, ensure the meeting is properly coordinated at the event;
11. Invite credible and objective media organisations where necessary;
12. Assign 1-2 professionals to discuss on effective police accountability;
13. Follow-up and ensure venue is adequate and suitable for event; It may be advisable for the venue to be outside where organisations are located to ensure adequate concentration;
14. On arrival day ensure that all expected persons arrive and adequately cater for by hotel;
15. On meeting day, coordination should be anchored by the technical person or organisation but chaired by one of the leaders of the oversight agencies;
16. Agenda should endeavour to harness ways of effective collaboration and ensure holistic and referral based overseeing of the police by all agencies;
17. Meeting should endeavour to include subsequent periodic meetings between agencies in order to foster smooth relationships among agencies;
18. A communiqué or report of the meeting should be developed at the end and resolutions followed-up by technical organisation or person for oversight agencies.

Lessons Learned

Lesson 1:

Notify agencies within ample time to ensure participation of chief executives.

Lesson 2:

From the beginning of the activity, re-echo the need for agencies to independently organise such meetings as it enhances continuous engagement

Lesson 3:

Endeavour to organise meeting out of geographical location of agencies, to ensure rap attention of chief executives.

Improvements

- Improved oversight agencies' service delivery to the public as a result of effective collaboration.
- A collective approach by oversight agencies when interacting with the police will most likely produce better results than when handled independently and at cross-purposes.
- Effective leadership meetings will enhance public trust in oversight agencies and the police.

Evaluation

- Frequency of engagements between oversight agencies and result of such engagements.
- Responses/feedback received from the public and even the police will determine if the leadership meetings are yielding results.
- Periodic visit to oversight agencies to determine level of collaboration can help assess effectiveness of activity.

SECTION 2: Leadership Meetings for External Oversight Agencies

The problem

- Accountability is one of the challenges faced in Nigeria since the return to democracy. For the Police, different external oversight agencies have been set up to enhance effective police accountability.
- The oversight agencies demanded for accountability without necessarily understanding the challenges faced by the police.
- Human rights were still violated by police officers, with little accountability for such violations.
- Out-dated police laws, which inevitably violated rights protected by the constitution and other rights instruments.
- Complaints submitted by oversight agencies and CSOs are rarely attended to and feedback barely given.

Background

The concept of accountability in the Nigeria society is a growing phenomenon that has from time desired more efforts with little results to show. The 1999 Constitution created the Police Service Commission with the power *“to appoint and exercise disciplinary control on officers of the Nigeria Police Force save the Inspector General of Police.”* The Public Complaints Commission, which pre-dates the 1999 Constitution was established in 1975 with wide mandates *“to inquire into complaints by members of the public concerning the administrative action of any public authority and companies or their officials...”* The National Human Rights Commission was established in 1995 with the mandate to protect and promote human rights in furtherance of the constitutional and international human rights.

These agencies have broad and sometimes overlapping mandates and as such the need for collaboration and support from each other cannot be overemphasized. The absence of a meeting forum between the police and oversight agencies necessitated this activity.

What you can do

Although the meeting is called a quarterly meeting, it can be held as frequent as maybe necessarily to enhance demand and supply side engagement between stakeholders. The quarterly meeting can be initiating for the purpose of bridging the gap between police oversight and policing. Ensure that the meetings are not confrontational to avoid a defensive approach from the police, rather encourage the supportive approach, which is likely to yield more results especially from the police.

What you can achieve

- Improved working relationship between the police, oversight agencies and CSOs.
- Improved police response to public complaints against the police received by oversight agencies and CSOs.
- Understand challenges faced by the police and assist in channelling some to the relevant authority for a progressive response.
- Engage with the police to building capacity of target officers on specific issues such as human rights, and effective policing.

Steps for Implementation

The Quarterly Meeting between the PSC, NHRC, PCC, NPF and CSOs is an activity that discusses issues directly impacting on the management of complaints against police officers, which may be organised periodically as deemed fit.

1. From inception meeting with oversight agencies, highlight this as an activity of the project;
2. Organise a planning meeting in-house for the activity mindful of project work-plan and objectives;
3. Organise a meeting with the leading oversight agencies (e.g. NHRC) to discuss the activity i.e. number of participants (including leadership of agencies) date, location and venue, assignment of role for each organisation;
4. Contact funder for approval of activity based on work-plan and budget;
5. Communicate back to the leading oversight agency via a letter, detailing date, venue, number of staff expected from their agency; leading agency should be informed to communicate with relevant government agencies while technical organisation or person communicates with CSOs;
6. Where the project requires geographical spread, as technical person or organisation invite CSOs from the geo-political zone to the location of activity and ensure adequate follow-up;
7. Where the activity permits, invite credible media organisations that work within the geo-political zone and have wide coverage to rural and urban areas;
8. As technical person or organisation draft program agenda and submit to leading agency for review, comments and suggestions;
9. Follow-up on identified hotel or venue to ensure suitability for event including rooms, meals, security and safe environment;
10. On activity day, leading organisation should anchor the activity with the assistance of the technical person or organisation;
11. Discussions should focus on inter-agency collaboration while ensuring that effective and accountable policing; discuss on issues of complaints against police, human rights violations etc.;
12. The activity should have a rapporteur as designated by the leading organisation or technical person/ organisation;
13. At the end of the activity and not more than one week from the date of the event, a report or communiqué should be developed and disseminated to relevant agencies and funder while ensuring resolutions are adequately followed;
14. To ensure continuous engagement between technical person, organisation and oversight agencies periodic interactions are highly encouraged.



Lessons Learned

Lesson 1:

Ensure that one agency (e.g. NHRC) is responsible for coordination of the meeting, to promote sustainability when the project terminates.

Lesson 2:

From the beginning of the activity, re-echo the need for agencies to independently organise such meetings as it enhances continuous engagement.

Lesson 3:

Endeavour to inform the police in time to designate a representative as the meeting must have the police, oversight agencies and CSOs to achieve its objective.

Improvements

- Improved trust between the police, oversight agencies and CSOs.
- Progressive and effective engagement, which involves a demand and supply side between the police, oversight agencies and CSOs.
- Improved police response to public complaints emanating from oversight agencies and CSOs.
- CSO advocacy for better management of police budget as it impacts on the welfare of officers.
- Enhance human rights and policing knowledge of police officers through targeted trainings.



Evaluation

- Frequency of engagements between oversight agencies, CSOs and police and result of such engagements.
- Effective responses/feedback from the police on public complaints submitted by oversight agencies and CSOs can serve as yardstick for assessment.

Contact

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