



Partnering with Police to Improve Abortion Access

Patty Skuster, Senior Policy Advisor
skusterp@ipas.org





42 million abortions globally, each year.
Half are unsafe, globally.

97% of all abortions are unsafe in Africa, resulting in millions of injuries and deaths.

Consequences of unsafe abortion

- Infection
- Hemorrhage
- Shock
- Infertility
- Chronic pain
- Death



- Restrictive laws
- **Misunderstanding of the law**
- Provider refusal
- **Police harassment, bribery, arrest**
- **Lack of information**
- Lack of trained providers





Police as Partners in Nigeria



Background

- Restrictive abortion law
- Women & girls resort to harmful self-help or patronizing quacks or expensive trained providers
- Occasional raids of facilities by law enforcement agents became means of extorting money from trained service providers



Objectives of engagement

- To facilitate better understanding of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights among the Nigeria Police force
- Foster a better relationship between Ipas trained providers and law enforcement agents
- Engage police in advocacy for law reform



Methods of engagement

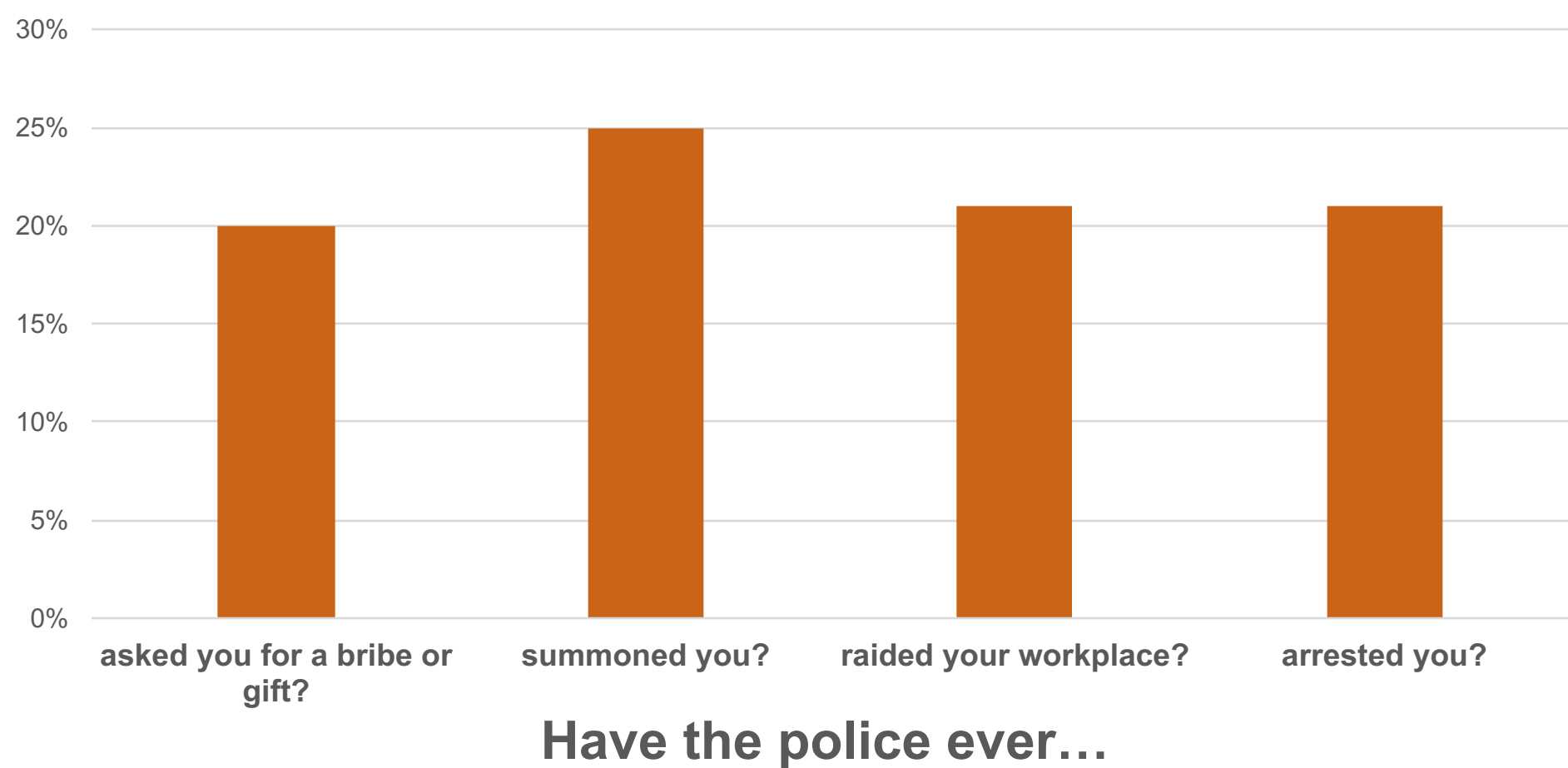
- Advocacy visits to: Inspector General, Assistant Inspector General in charge of Zones, the Commissioners of Police in charge of states
- Two-day trainings
- Participation in monthly meetings divisional police officers during and State commissioners



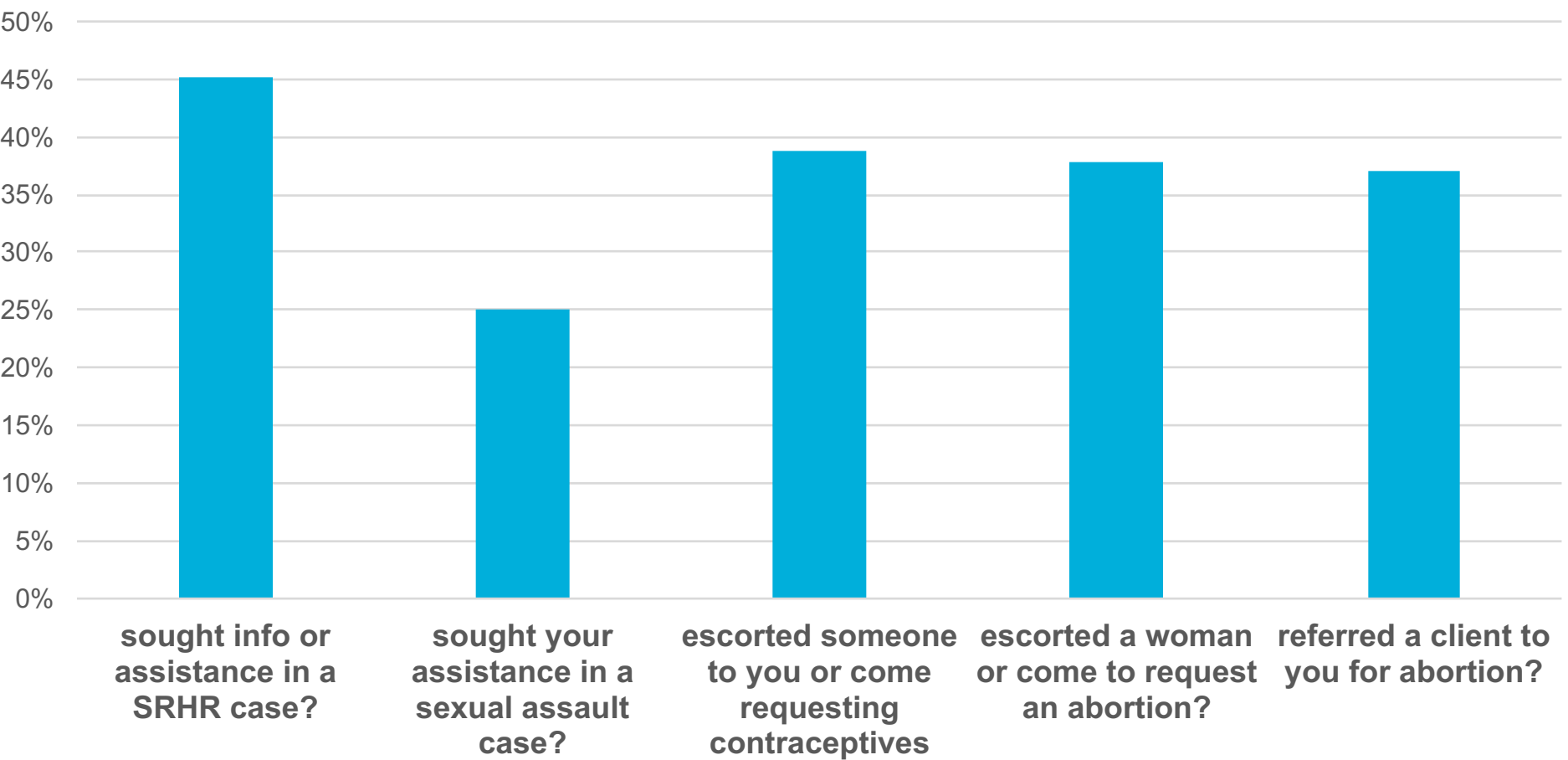
An Evaluation of Reproductive Rights Training for Police Officers in Nigeria



Survey results: Experiences of providers (n=124)

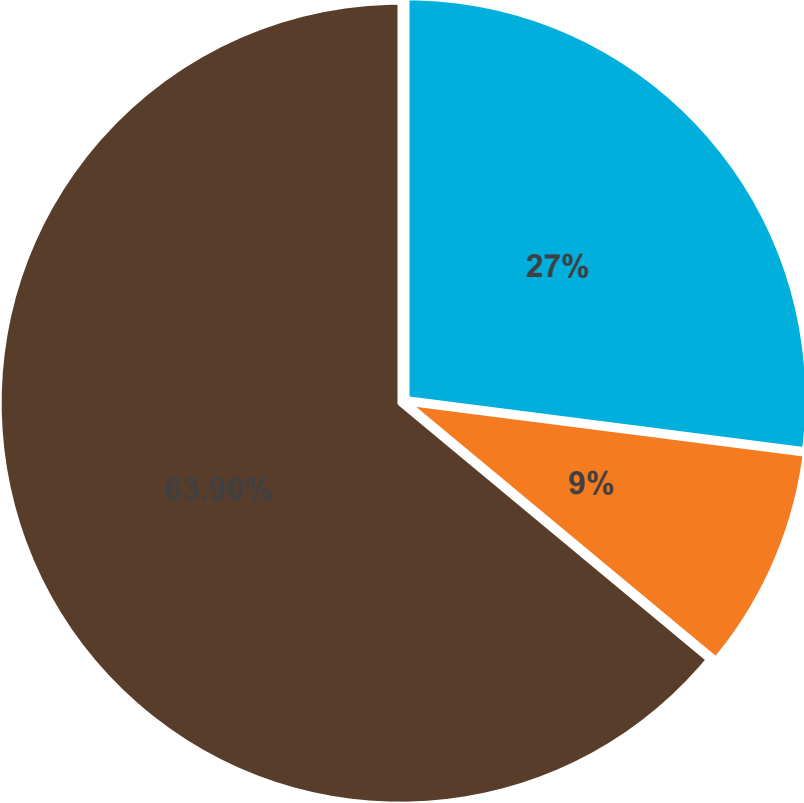


Survey results: Experiences of providers (n=124)



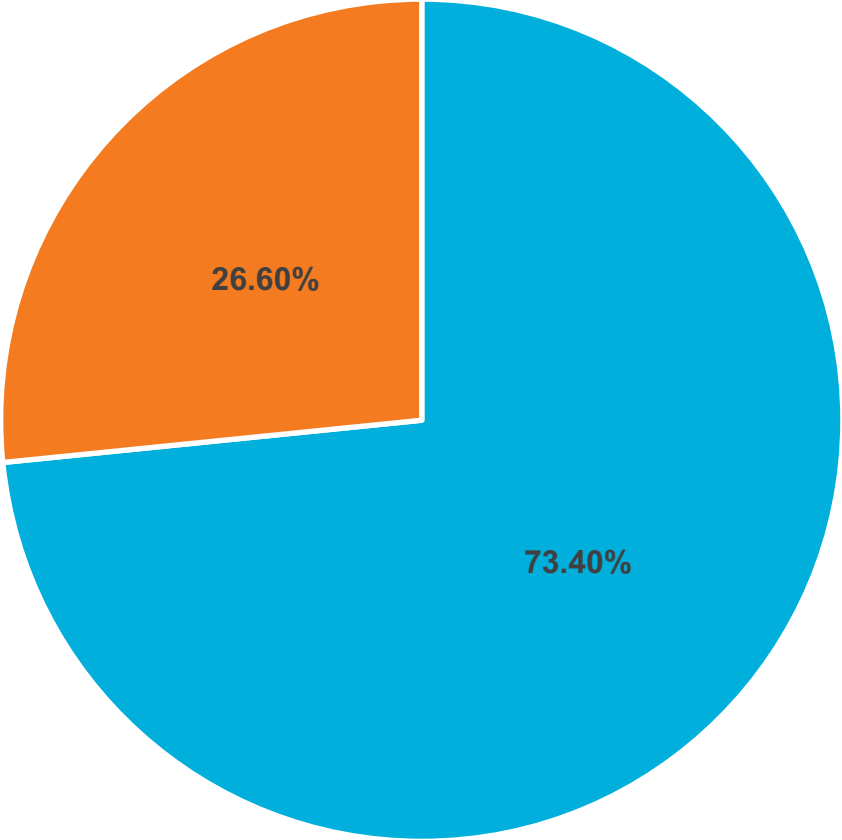
Has a local police ever...

How strong are your fears of police interference in your safe abortion provision?



- I am occasionally concerned
- I am very afraid
- I have little or no fear

Have your fears about police interference in your abortion service decreased over the past four years?



- Yes
- no

Why have your fears about police interference in your abortion service decreased over the past four years?

In the past 4 years since the appearance of Ipas, police have stopped disturbing and extorting money from me. Thanks.

Probably because of Ipas... the police no longer see us as doing something illegitimate

Due to police involvement in work conducted by Ipas, their visits/harassment on clinics in my zone has gone down remarkably

Why have your fears about police interference in your abortion service decreased over the past four years?

Since Ipas came in and held occasional meetings with the police and providers together, my fear has decreased.

In the past 2 years Ipas has been able to create rapport between the provider and police

I am a friend to the police stations. My facility falls under two divisional police stations, so each one of them is enjoying personal gifts from the hospital every year.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR PARTNERING WITH POLICE TO IMPROVE ABORTION ACCESS



Section 1: Why partner with police on abortion

Section 2: Who are the police?

Section 3: How can you work with police to ensure access to abortion care?

Section 4: Training resources



 **ip**pas
Health. Access. Rights.