An Analysis of the Strategic Initiatives of the Philippine National Police-Cordillera
Towards the Realization of the PNP P.A.T.R.O.L. Plan 2030

Laureano Alexis R. Mariñás¹
Marilou M. Saong²
Gerardo K. Tumbagá, Sr.³

Abstract

Crime has become one of the most serious social problems around the world. Developing innovative efforts to reduce crime and social disorder is now an integral part of modern police work. Although fighting crime and maintaining public order are two of the most important tasks of the government, policy makers tend to have very limited information on how to achieve this goal. The current realities and challenges that beset the Police Regional Office Cordillera (PRO-COR) are indeed the reasons for adopting a good governance program along with the PNP Performance Governance System or PNP P.A.T.R.O.L. Plan 2030. Thus, this study employed quantitative research design using a researcher-made questionnaire, structured interview, reports and PRO-COR Scorecards to determine the level of effectiveness of the crime prevention, crime solution, public safety and police community relations activities conducted in the fulfillment of the PNP P.A.T.R.O.L. Plan 2030. The respondents consisted of 160 members of the Provincial/City Peace and Order Council and 70 members of the Provincial/City Advisory Council. The results revealed that the crime prevention, crime solution, public safety and police community relations activities were highly effective. T-test for independent samples revealed that there were no significant differences in the level of effectiveness of the activities as perceived by the two groups of respondents. It is therefore concluded that the transformation program of the PNP involving the perspectives on community, process excellence, learning and growth, and resource management were highly realized by PNP Cordillera through the various strategic initiatives conducted.

Keywords: crime prevention and solution, level of effectiveness, PRO-COR

Introduction:

In light of the population growth and rapidly urbanization advances all over the world, crime has become one of the most serious social problems. Thus, developing innovative efforts to reduce crime and social disorder is now an integral part of modern police work (Barthe, 2006). In fact, government agencies and other authorities are trying to overcome this crime phenomenon by investing a lot of money in prevention measures (Marzbali, Abdullah, Razak, & Tilaki, 2011). In particular, crime prevention has entered a new, more robust phase of research activity and holds greater relevance to policy and practice today than ever before. It stands as an important component of an overall strategy to reduce crime. This has brought greater attention to the need for higher quality program evaluations as well as the need for more rigorous, systematic methods to synthesize the research evidence and examine policy implications (Welsh & Farrington, 2010).

There has been an avalanche of research relating to crime prevention for the past 20 years. But questions remained about what

¹Police Regional Office-Cordillera, Camp Bado Dangwa, La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines
²Research and Development Center, University of Baguio, Baguio City, Philippines
³School of Criminal Justice and Public Safety, University of Baguio, Baguio City, Philippines
were learned about major initiatives to foster the creation and use of a research-informed knowledge base for crime prevention and community safety (Tilley & Laycock, 2018). Researches around the world consistently demonstrate that the effectiveness of many crime prevention initiatives is reduced by a continual lack of access to adequate crime prevention knowledge and technical skills. In particular, the internationalisation of crime has highlighted the need for renewed effort aimed at increasing the efficiency of knowledge transfer, skills development, project and program management ability, and performance measurement and evaluation capacity (Homel, 2009).

Crime prevention is a living concept whose boundaries vary depending on the institutional framework in which it is used, and on the geographical regions, languages, and time periods in which it takes place. As underlined in the first International Centre for the Prevention of Crime International Report, “prevention” comprises strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes.” (International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, 2010).

Approaches to crime prevention has developed over time and are reflected in different United Nations resolutions and in practices and policies implemented around the world. The emphasis is not only on how crime can be reduced but also on how this can be used to maintain and reinforce social cohesion of communities themselves to collectively act and to improve their quality of life. The most recent UN guidelines, the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime—2002, outline four types of approach to crime prevention: Crime prevention through social development, locally based crime prevention, or “community prevention”, situational crime prevention and reduction of recidivism. These approaches and their implementation, both at the policy level and on the ground, have progressively integrated the notion of community safety, or the safety of communities (in the sense of living spaces, neighbourhoods, schools, etc.) (International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, 2010).

The prevalence of crime is common in rural and urban areas around the world including the Philippines. Although fighting crime and maintaining public order are two of the most important tasks of the government, policy makers tend to have very limited information on how to achieve this goal (Vollaard, 2006). With this fact, the Philippine government and all its institutions are tasked to prepare for the challenges the nation faces in all the facets of its existence. Just like any organization that needs to stay relevant and productive in the long run, the Philippine National Police (PNP), as an institution of Philippine government has to change to cope with the prevailing needs of the community in terms of peace and order and public safety services. As an organization, the PNP has always been continuously evolving. As it evolves, changes have been developed and implemented to cope with the changing of times. Thus, this study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of the implementation of the PNP P.A.T.R.O.L. Plan 2030 in the Cordillera Region. Specifically, it aimed to determine the level of effectiveness of the activities conducted by the PRO-COR in the fulfillment of the PNP P.A.T.R.O.L. Plan in terms of crime prevention, crime solution, public safety and police community relations; and compare the level of effectiveness of the activities conducted by the PRO-COR based on the perception of the Provincial/City Peace and Order Council (P/C POC); and Provincial/City Advisory Council (P/C AC).

Methodology:
Research Design
Quantitative research design using a researcher-made questionnaire, structured interview and documentary analysis, was employed in this
study to determine the level of effectiveness of the crime prevention, crime solution, public safety and police community relation activities conducted by Police Regional Office Cordillera (PRO-COR).

Population and Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). It is the largest mountain range in the Philippines. It consists of 6 provinces, and one (1) chartered city. It has seventy-five (75) municipalities and one component city with 1,177 barangays.

The respondents of the study were members of the Provincial and City Peace and Order Councils (P/CPOC) and the Provincial and City Advisory Councils (P/CPAC) of the following provinces/cities: Abra Province, Apayao Province, Benguet Province, Ifugao Province, Mountain Province, Kalinga Province, Tabuk City (Kalinga), and Baguio City. The two groups were particularly selected for the study due to the following reasons: The PPOC/CPOC is composed of the Governor and different government line agencies which is created through the Local Government Codes. The PPOC is a forum wherein issues/concerns about peace and order, public safety, environment and all milieus about good governance are being discussed and threshed out holistically. The PACs/ CACs/ MACs/ SACs/ BACs on the other hand consist of stakeholders from different sectors of the society, particularly the Local Government Unit, Non-government Agency, Media, Religious/ Church, Business, Academe, Civil Society, Senior Citizen, Youth, and other relevant sectors of the society. The members of the council act as advisers of the different offices/stations of the PNP on its PGS journey towards the Institutionalization Stage. The two councils have experienced and observed the Transformation Program of the PNP Cordillera Region in all its perspectives. Since the two groups represent the Cordillera community that has to be satisfied with the services that PNP provides, their evaluation reflects what needs to be done in the community to enhance their Programs.

The total number of P/CPOC members based on the data provided by the Department of the Interior and Local Government - Cordillera Administrative Region (DILG-CAR) to the researcher on August 15, 2018 was 276. On the other hand, the total number of P/CPAC members based on the data provided by the Regional Police Strategy Management Unit (RPSMU), PRO-COR to the researcher on August 15, 2018 was 92. All in all, the total number of council members was 368. Survey questionnaires were distributed to all the members of the P/CPOC and P/CPAC. Out of 368 only 230 were retrieved giving a 62.5% retrieval rate.

Data Gathering Tools:

A survey questionnaire served as the main data gathering tool for this study. The first part contained the profile of the respondents in terms of their council membership. The second part contained the indicator activities of the PRO-COR in terms of crime prevention, crime solution, public safety and police community relations which the respondents evaluated in terms of effectiveness using a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was developed based on the existing scoreboard and dashboards and improved based on the advice of experts and the PRO-COR Advisory Council. It underwent validity testing through the Research and Development Center of the University of Baguio. Further, it was tried out to some members of the PRO-COR Regional Advisory Council (RAC); PRO-COR Regional Technical Working Group (RTWG) on PNP P.A.T.R.O.L. Plan 2030; and the Regional Police Strategy Management Unit (RPSMU) for the purpose of determining its internal consistency. The Cronbach alpha value was 0.975 which implies that the tool was deemed highly reliable.
Data Gathering Procedures:

The data were gathered directly from the respondents. The researcher determined the exact number of respondents by requesting from the DILG-CAR the current members of the Provincial and City Peace and Order Councils (P/CPOC) of the following provinces/cities: Abra Province, Apayao Province, Benguet Province, Ifugao Province, Mountain Province, Kalinga Province, Tabuk City (Kalinga Province), and Baguio City. Also, a separate request from the PRO-COR was made regarding the current members of the P/CPOC. After determining the population of the respondents required from the P/CPOCs of the different provinces and cities of Cordillera region, and the P/CPACs of the different Police Provincial/City Offices of PRO-COR the researcher, with the approval of the Regional Director, coordinated with the provincial and city police directors to inform them about the research and to seek their help in the administration of the questionnaires to the identified respondents of this research. To validate the results of the survey, interviews were conducted with a key officer of the Regional Peace and Order Council-CAR and an another key officer of the Regional Advisory Council of PRO-COR. Further, PROCOR’s Scorecards from 2013 to 2018 and the 2018 PROCOR’s Performance Governance Report–Proficiency Stage were utilized.

Treatment of Data:

To determine the level of effectiveness of the activities conducted by PRO-COR in the fulfillment of the PNP P.A.T.R.O.L. Plan in terms of crime prevention, crime solution, public safety and police community relations, mean values were computed.

To determine if there was a significant difference in the level of effectiveness of the activities conducted by the PRO-COR in terms of crime prevention, crime solution, public safety and police community relations when the respondents were grouped as: Provincial/City Peace and Order Council (P/C POC) and Provincial/City Advisory Council (P/C AC), t-test for independent samples was used. All statistical analyses in this study were performed using IBM-SPSS software.

Ethical Considerations:

The researcher requested the PRO-COR Regional Director for an endorsement of research and permission of its conduct. The researcher also wrote a letter of request to all Police Provincial and City Directors for the administration of the questionnaires to their respective area of responsibility. The researcher sought audience with the Police Provincial/City Directors in one of their staff conferences so that the administration and retrieval of the questionnaires at their level was done systematically. In the letter to the respondents it was explicitly stated that participation in the study was voluntary.

The respondents were assured that their responses will be taken in anonymity and confidentiality with the end-in-view of using their responses to better the services of the PNP Cordillera. The strategic and operational action plans developed were based solely from the results of the survey. To ensure privacy of the participants, interviews with key members of the Regional Peace and Order Council-CAR and the Regional Advisory Council of PRO-COR, were conducted at their respective offices at their most convenient time. For coding purposes, the key member of the Regional Peace and Order Council-CAR is presented as interviewee A and the key member of the Regional Advisory Council of PRO-COR as interviewee B, in succeeding presentation and discussions of results. The results of the research were forwarded to the Police Regional Office (PRO-COR), then communicated to Provincial Police Offices/City Police Office where it will be discussed during council’s meetings, dialogues, and other related gatherings pertaining to peace an order and public safety in the community.
Results and Discussion:

Crime Prevention

The study revealed that the crime prevention activities of PRO-COR have mean values interpreted as highly effective, with an over-all mean of 4.0348 (SD=.56949). The result implies that police presence was highly felt, seen/observed and experienced by the public as to how the PNP Cordillera performed its mission and functions in crime prevention which eventually resulted to several transformative outcomes in the region. These transformations were clearly exhibited through the following: properly informed stakeholders and community, mobilized volunteers for crime prevention activities, well-informed community on Modus Operandi, utilization of the Barangay Peacekeeping Action Teams (BPATs) in peace and order programs, passing of relevant resolutions, decrease in incidents involving firearms, increase in surrendered/deposited firearms, formulation of ordinances, no incidents of terrorist group, reduction of focus crimes, feeling of security of the community members and others. These transformative outcomes were documented in the reports prepared by the Baguio City Police Office and other Provincial Police Offices in the Region in 2018 and PRO-COR’s Scorecards.

As shared by Interviewee A, part of the development efforts of the Regional Development Council is the maintenance of peace and order in the region. That is why the RDC’s emphasis is alleviating poverty because poverty impacts peace and order (personal interview, January 12, 2019). Manwong and Delizo (2006) state that intensive or massive poverty can be singled out as the primary cause of crime in the underdeveloped countries such as the Philippines. This is characterized by intensive widespread of unemployment, underemployment due to lack of job opportunities, low income and productivity, rapid population growth rates, and others. Due to poverty, many of the people become desperate and forced by circumstances to resort to crime for them to escape from their miseries and frustrations. Complemented by the OPAP cooperation under the RDC, the development in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) is anchored on the following components: infrastructure, socio-cultural, etc. in order to discourage the cultivation/plantation of marijuana in several parts of the region. Alternatives means of living or alternative sources of income that are reliable and continuing must be provided to these cultivators. Thus, as recommended by Interviewee A, there is a need for the PNP to study the effectiveness of improving this aspect of cooperation with the LGUs and private individuals (personal interview, January 12, 2019). These strategies are parallel to Singapore’s crime prevention approaches wherein the police ventures to establish strategic alliances and partnerships with grassroots bodies, private organizations, various trade associations, public institutions, etc, to curb crime. As pointed out by Byrne & Marx (2011), agencies may be wasting crime prevention resources on unproven strategies, many of them coercive in nature. Thus, a more prudent course would be to reallocate resources to non-coercive strategies with known crime/violence prevention effects (e.g. education, jobs, poverty reduction) and fewer ethical concerns.

Researchers have examined the influence/role of formal social control mechanisms (e.g. the deterrent effects of police, courts, and corrections) and informal social control mechanisms, with a focus on the influence (through mechanisms such as attachment, commitment, and involvement) of family, peers, school, work, community and the role of shame and belief systems/religion in relation to crime prevention (Byrne and Marx, 2011). As emphasized by Homel (2009), crime prevention must be a responsibility concerning all of society. Effective crime prevention policies need to establish channels of communication, and platforms of exchange, aimed at actively
involving individual citizens, non-government organizations, private relief organizations, professional and religious associations, and the private sector in determining how to make society collectively safer through civic commitment, democratic participation and civil courage. As underscored by Interviewee A (personal interview, January 12, 2019), “crime prevention and solution including the overall public safety cannot be done alone by the police. Teamwork and community cooperation are still important. There is a need for the sharing and distribution of responsibility between the police & civilians, and a big percentage of the community, more often than not, can contribute in the prevention and solution of crimes as long as the police maintains good relations with the community at large or with the ordinary or common people”.

The need of the establishment/creation of Information Communication Technology (ICT)-compliant Police Offices/Stations on crime prevention was stressed by Interviewee A (personal interview, January 12, 2019). “Through competency training of the police with the latest technology, wherein they can generate crime data immediately, they could easily deploy their patrols where crime incidents are prevalent. Because of this, they can also focus more in a more problematic area or barangay. With the information that they can generate such as the place/location of crime, time of commission, crime hotspots, modes of crime committed then all the more that they prevent and solve crimes.” The impact of the ICT based initiatives in crime prevention was further highlighted by Interviewee A. He shared that even in crime reporting & monitoring system, there is already great improvement. Crimes are now immediately and accurately reported. His statement corroborates the study of Welsh and Farrington (2007) which emphasized that “Technological advances over the years have had a profound influence on the way people think about crime and the efforts that are taken to prevent it. An area where information technology has been used to prevent crime is in the use of newly developed computer software and creation of devices to monitor individual transactions and communications, on the cell phone, over the internet, and on various web-based social media sites (Soghoian, 2011). A review of the efforts to prevent crime underscores the point that technology – or more precisely, technological innovation – has been the driving force leading to reform of crime prevention and crime control strategies, both by individual citizens and concerned groups, and by formal police agencies (Reichert, 2001; Chan, 2001; Harris, 2007).

On the contrary the studies of Hummer (2007) and Harris (2007) concluded that police technology has not been found to significantly improve police performance. Similar assessments of the limited measurable impact of police technology on police performance have been reached by others who have reviewed the available research on the impact of recent technological innovations on police performance (Manning, 2003). Technological innovation has the potential to dramatically improve both the efficiency and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system; but it also has the potential to divert critical resources away from more traditional crime prevention and police strategies that may actually make us safer, without the negative side effects (e.g. erosion of personal freedom, increased public distrust, emphasis on coercive control, etc). T-test for independent samples revealed that there is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness of crime prevention activities conducted by PRO-COR as perceived by the P/COP and P/CAC, t(228)= -0.550, p(.583)>.05. Despite differences in composition and PPAs implemented, undoubtedly the two councils shared common roles, that is, their quest for transformation program and to improve further police services in the region. The two councils have experienced and observed the
Transformation Program of the PNP Cordillera Region in all its perspectives. They are the ones who sense its effectiveness which explains why the two groups of respondents gave the same rating on the effectiveness to the crime prevention activities of PRO-COR. Since the two groups represent the Cordillera community that has to be satisfied with the services that PNP provides, their evaluation reflects what needs to be done in the community to enhance their Program.

Crime solution:

The data on the increase in Index Crime Clearance Efficiency and Index Crime Solution Efficiency strengthened the result of the survey wherein the indicator with the highest mean (M=4.0261, SD=.75877) is on “immediate filing of cases with the prosecution or courts against identified/ arrested suspects”. The result reflects that for the respondents, the enforcement of criminal laws by immediate filing of cases is the most effective crime solution strategy conducted by PRO-COR. This result further implies that aside from crime rates the number of arrests and fines issued can likewise be used to measure police performance. Based on PROCOR’s scorecards in 2015 to 2018, on the average, 18% and 35% of the most wanted persons and other wanted persons, respectively, were arrested by PNP Cordillera. According to the US National Institute of Justice (2010), no reasonable or informed person can doubt that enactment and enforcement of criminal laws affect behavior directly and indirectly or that law enforcement must be a component of any country’s effort to protect its citizens from crime. Similarly, no reasonable or informed person can doubt that some potential offenders are deterred by fear of sanctions or that some crimes are prevented by confining some offenders or otherwise controlling their movements or activities. In relation to this, the “close coordination by the police with prosecution or courts in the filing of criminal cases against offenders/ perpetrators” was also seen by the respondents to be highly effective. For instance, the enhanced coordinating conferences of Baguio City Police Office (BCPO) with City Justice, Human Rights, and Peace and Order Council and the strengthened coordination with the other pillars of the Criminal Justice System has led to prompt solution of cases (BCPO Operations Review, 2018).

In relation to the results of the current study, the United Nations Millennium Development Declaration 2000 highlights that one of the ways of alleviating poverty is by offering security and providing opportunity to train the police, who will provide an enabling environment. Police proficiency can only be achieved through continuous and thorough professional training that empowers police officers to execute their duties in conformity with rule of the law in a democratic country (Mumanthi & Gachunga, 2014). As argued by Terra (2009), one of the ways of retention of police officers is through training and having structured training programs which add value to the organization. Training promotes job satisfaction and enhances high quality performance thus marrying training with employee performance (Borgas, 2005).

To further realize the importance of investigation in solving crimes and its crucial role in the overall anti-criminality campaign, PNP’s three-pronged strategy shift to modern and effective investigation was anchored on: System Development and Enhancement (IT Solutions); Development of Policies and Manuals; and Capacity Building Enhancement (DIDM’s Program Thrust, 2015). In relation to IT solutions, PROCOR’s “use of internet/ web-based investigative methods in the investigation of crimes/ cases” (M=3.6870, SD=.82393) and “use of internet/ web-based investigative methods in the filing of criminal cases against identified/ arrested suspects” (M=3.7130, SD=.78485) got the lowest mean values among the indicators, but still interpreted as highly effective. These methods refer to PNP’s e-Projects
using internet/web-based programs to store, monitor/evaluate and report crime statistics/data real-time through the Next Generation Investigation Solution or NGIS. The lowest mean values can be explained by the fact that there is poor internet connectivity in most remote parts of the region thus, limiting the use of internet/web-based investigative methods. Amidst the fast changes and advancement in information and communication technology (ICT), the peculiar terrain of the region is one of the challenging aspects on how the ICT companies can provide uninterrupted signals to allow the people to have sustained access to and connectivity to the global village (Herald Express, 2017).

Review of the historical development of efforts to prevent crime underscores the point that technology, or more precisely, technological innovation, has been the driving force leading to reform of crime prevention and crime control strategies, both by individual citizens and concerned groups, and by formal police agencies (Reichert, 2001; Chan, 2001; Harris, 2007). As revealed in this current study, the use of soft technology, or the internet, was found to be effective in solving crimes, as perceived by the members of the PPOC and RAC respondents and PROCOR’s scorecards. But some scholars have raised questions about how much has really changed (Manning, 2003). Two reviews (Hummer, 2007; Harris, 2007) of technology and the police describe this transformation process, review the evidence of its impact on police practices and outcomes, and discuss the implications of technological changes in policing for the public. Both Hummer (2007) and Harris (2007) reach similar conclusions: police technology has not been found to significantly improve police performance. Similar assessments of the limited measurable impact of police technology on police performance have been reached by others who have reviewed the available research on the impact of recent technological innovations on police performance (Manning, 2003). The findings of Hummer (2007) and Harris (2007) suggest that validation of the perceived effectiveness of use of internet/web-based investigative methods of PROCOR should be conducted at the grass root level or the community where the impact of the projects are mostly felt.

Public safety:

As stressed in the National Economic and Development Authority’s Vision 2040, with fear, people cannot pursue opportunities. Freedom from fear includes peace, safety, and stability. Creating an environment that frees people from fear requires the rule of law, justice, social security, and security from disasters and conflict (NEDA, 2017). In this aspect, police performance in ensuring citizens’ level of comfort and sense of security needs to be properly measured (Maslov, 2015).

The survey result revealed that the activities conducted by PRO-COR in relation to public safety were highly effective with an over-all mean of 3.9546 (SD=.59748). The result implies that PNP Cordillera’s activities to respond to public disturbances, in responding to public’s needs during emergency situations and calamities and in addressing problems on insurgency, were highly effective. The indicator with the highest mean is on the “regular conduct of preventive patrols/security measures in public places/conveyances” (M=4.1174, SD=.73535) followed by the “strengthening of security measures/procedures of Police Offices/Stations” (M=4.0913, SD=.75079) and the “regular conduct of preventive patrols/security measures in vital installations/critical infrastructures” (M=4.0696, SD=.73848). The results imply that for the respondents, police presence is still the most effective activity in ensuring public safety in the Region. According to an article by the Scottish government in 2006, policing and police visibility were consistently expressed as key factors in addressing the need for increased public reassurance. Essentially, a visible police presence
was thought to allow for greater police engagement across communities with the expected outcome being a reduction in crime. Reviews of the best evidence of ‘what works’ in policing to reduce crime have highlighted that visible police patrol can reduce crime, but only if it is specifically targeted to crime hotspots (high crime locations) (Sherman & Eck, 2002; Weisburd & Eck, 2004). There is also robust evidence to suggest that targeted patrol, particularly targeted foot patrol, can have a positive impact on public perceptions (Dalgleish & Myhill, 2004). Importantly, foot patrol was used by the police to initiate positive, informal contact with members of the public and in response to local priorities.

As perceived by the respondents, PNP Cordillera’s conduct of intensified internal security operations and preventive patrols, and the continuous information and education through lectures and dialogues in communities where communists or insurgents are present, were highly effective. The implementation of PROCOR IMPLAN CMC 05/2014 on the “intensified internal security operations” pertaining to the conduct of comprehensive information operation has resulted to no incident of CNN/terrorist group and CNN recruitment as reflected in BCPO’s 2018 Operational Review.

So why does the government have to allot resources in information and education campaigns in order to curb insurgency? A major theoretical argument on violence is the hearts-and-minds approach, which states that the key predictor of violence is the attitude of the population towards the government. That attitude in turn predicts whether insurgents can survive to conduct attacks against a militarily superior foe (Berman, Felter & Shapiro, 2009). In this sense, PROCOR is continuously conducting information and education activities in remote communities in the Cordillera to inform people of the different socio-economic programs and services provided by the government. The PNP’s thrust to educate local communities on the said programs and employment opportunities is likewise supported by the opportunity-cost approach which assumes that participation in insurgency is a full-time occupation, in the sense that individuals cannot be legitimately employed and active insurgents at the same time. Insurgency is a low-skill occupation so that creating jobs for the marginal unemployed reduces the pool of potential recruits (Berman, Felter & Shapiro, 2009).

Police organization plays a first responder role in disaster management given its proximity to the incident site and relationship with the people. As such, the local police must be trained, equipped and supported with legislation and logistics so that they find themselves capable so support the victims (SOP for Police during natural disaster, n.d.). The PNP, as a member agency of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) which is the principal policy-making and coordinating body, is mandated to conduct disaster risk reduction and management activities through a three-stage approach, namely, Pro-active Assessment Stage, Disaster Incident Management and Support to Recovery and Rehabilitation efforts (IMPLAN “SAKLOLO”, 2014). Thus, in relation to the role of PNP in disaster risk reduction and management, the respondents in the study perceived that the continuous simulation exercises/ drills on search and rescue operations with the community stakeholders (M=3.9130, SD=.74253) and the maintenance of trained search and rescue personnel/ teams to immediately respond to any calamity or emergency situations (M=4.0348, SD=.75416) were highly effective. Despite the effectiveness in the conduct of the said activities though, the mountainous terrain of the Cordillera poses a challenge in cases of police response as there are communities that are far from the police stations while some are not even reached by roads (PROCOR Performance Governance Report-Proficiency Stage, 2018).
The indicators with the lowest mean values are: “Joint training by the police with the Armed Forces of the Philippines”, (M=3.6000, SD=.94661) and the “Joint training by the police with other Law Enforcement Agencies”, (M=3.7130, SD=.90862). This could be attributed to the scheduling of trainings which sometimes do not fit the schedule of PROCOR personnel.

In terms of the over-all mean, t-test for independent samples revealed that there is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness of the activities conducted by PROCOR in terms of public safety as perceived by the two groups, t(228)=0.177, p = .860 > .05. The result implies that PROCOR’s activities to ensure a safe Cordillera are equally effective from the perspectives of both the Government and the stakeholders. PNP Cordillera RAC, as the stakeholder in the study are regular and active attendees of the unit’s Strategy and Operations reviews. They provide information, strategic insights and operational guidance in making PROCOR’s objectives, measures, targets and initiatives truly responsive to the people of the Cordillera (PROCOR Performance Governance Report-Proficiency Stage, 2018).

Police Community Relations:

Community Policing revolves around the basic principle that the - Police are the Public and the Public are the Police (Principle #7, Sir Robert Peel, Founder of the British Police system). It is a policing concept that requires every member of the community to exercise self-policing, restrain other members against doing things that may harm each other, and require other members to conduct themselves in an orderly interaction. Policing therefore, should win the trust, confidence and support of the people in the community such that policing becomes a norm and not just obedience to a set of rules. This concept suggests that basic policing in the community should focus on the core concept of Police Community Relations (PCR) (Philippine National Police Community Police Relations Manual [Revised], 2012).

The quality of the relationship between the police and the public determines to a significant degree just how effective policing will be in the protection of social order (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2017). In this regard, the result of the survey shows that the police community relations activities of PROCOR were highly effective, with an over-all mean of 4.0128 (SD=.62416). The level of effectiveness denotes that strong relationships of mutual trust have been established between PRO-COR and the communities it serves. This kind of relationship is critical to maintaining public safety and effective policing, thus, clearly validating the high level of effectiveness of PRO-COR’s activities in terms of crime prevention, crime solution and public safety, as presented in the previous sections. Crime in the region cannot be prevented and solved by PRO-COR if the community does not have confidence in the police to do so, or if for some other reasons crime is not reported. Some of the primary drivers in enhancing community engagement in the Cordillera were the highly effective “conduct of dialogues and meetings” (M=4.0783, SD=.78354) and “lectures and symposia” (M=3.9957, SD=.78467) to increase community awareness and participation in crime prevention and public safety activities. As shared in an article by the US Department of Justice (n.d), police officials rely on the cooperation of community members to provide information about crime in their neighborhoods, and to work with the police to devise solutions to crime and disorder problems. Similarly, community members’ willingness to trust the police depends on whether they believe that police actions reflect community values and incorporate the principles of procedural justice and legitimacy.

Survey result further shows that “requiring police personnel-on-duty/ patrollers to be in proper uniform or presentable outfit in the performance of their duties” got the highest mean
value (M=4.1652, SD=.75842) among the police community relations activities of PRO-COR. As discussed in an article by the Sam Houston State University (2016), clothing can help determine a person’s gender, social status, occupation, or even if the individual is a person of authority. The police uniform is no exception, and police officers are not exempt from these judgments. In fact, this psychological and sociological phenomenon plays an important part in the public perception of the police. The police uniform influences attitudes and behaviors of the wearers which expounds the result on “requiring police personnel-on-duty/patrollers to display courteous and disciplined behavior” (M=4.0913, SD=0.79933). As further shared by Johnson (2001), the uniform of a police officer conveys the power and authority of the person wearing it; it is a powerful clue to the wearer’s authority, capability, and status. It also has a subconscious psychological influence on people. Citizens in the presence of a person in uniform cooperate more and curb their illegal or deviant behaviors. Thus, in relation to the results of the current study, police uniform and behavior are highly effective features of PRO-COR in ensuring public safety in the region.

As further revealed in the survey, the “maintenance of police assistance desks in public places during special events/public gatherings” also got the highest mean value (M=4.1652, SD=.76416). The said result once again emphasizes that policing and police visibility are key factors in addressing the need for increased public reassurance. Essentially, a visible police presence was thought to allow for greater police engagement across communities with the expected outcome being a reduction in crime (Scottish Government, 2006). The “maintenance of established information/help desks in every police office/station” (M=4.1478, SD=7.3281) and the “maintenance of established quality service lanes for persons with disabilities (PWD), elderly, pregnant women and children at Police Offices/Stations” (M=4.0391, SD=.85817) were found to be highly effective PCR activities as well. As pointed out by Rogers & Houston (2004), while the design and management of the police estate won’t alone transform confidence in the police, well designed, public minded police stations can enhance the image of the police among victims and public. It can also decrease feelings of vulnerability among the public at large.

Trust can impact on the way the public engage with public organizations. For example, lower trust appears to cause people to lose confidence in services, reduce contact with them, and make them less likely to engage positively in helping and planning services. In particular those who distrust the police are much less likely to give evidence or help the police in their inquiries (Rogers & Houston, 2004). Further, Otter (2017) underscored that for officers to behave in a way that fosters legitimacy and cooperation by the public, they too need to believe that they are being treated with fairness and respect internally within their police force. The research of Myhill and Quinton (2011) has found that a policing approach that motivates the public to cooperate with the police and to not break the law could have significant benefits for crime prevention. The research further revealed that the most important factor motivating people to cooperate and not break the law was the legitimacy of the police. Trust and shared values were found to be key aspects of legitimacy. These attitudes were largely fostered by the perception of police fairness and not by the perception of police effectiveness (in terms of responding to emergencies, preventing and detecting crime, and keeping order). In other words, the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the public was primarily based on people thinking officers would treat them with respect, make fair decisions and take time to explain them, and be friendly and approachable. This kind of mutual trust and respect has been achieved between PRO-COR and the community for the past years, as evidenced by the consistently high Regional Safety Indices, Police Performance Satisfaction
Indices, Trust Indices and Respect Indices as reported in PRO-COR’s scorecards. From 2015 to 2018, Regional Safety Indices ranged from 95% to 98.22%; Police Performance Satisfaction Indices from 95% to 98.14%, Trust Indices from 94% to 97.78% and Respect Indices from 93% to 97.58%. The reported values were measured through the conduct of “survey of people’s/ community’s respect, trust, performance satisfaction and feeling of safety amidst police presence” (M=3.8783, SD=.77231), which in this current study was shown to be highly effective. The Community Engagement Survey gauges the perception of the community on how PRO-COR personnel are delivering the peace, order and security services to them. In the Community Engagement Survey conducted in 2015, majority (62.88%) trust the police, 61.39% of the community have good perception towards the police, 69.57% respect the police and 62.74% feels satisfied towards the police.

The public’s level of satisfaction with the police is a complex concept that is often difficult to quantify and gathering data can be costly (Clarke, 2002; Castle, 2008; Ganjavi, LeBrasseur & Whissell, 2000; Gallagher, Maguire, Mastrofski, & Reisig, 2001). Still, it is extremely important to capture the public’s perceptions about the performance of the police through surveys and track it over time periods. These performance measures can be used on their own in some cases, or they can be combined with other direct measures, such as crime and clearance rates (Ganjavi, LeBrasseur & Whissell, 2000). According to the study described in Ganjavi, LeBrasseur & Whissell (2000), the overall quality of police service was rated as most important to the public, over other specific measures, such as the level of crime and the visibility of police in the neighborhood. Moreover, there is a symbiotic relationship between the public and the police with respect to how effective the police are, or are deemed to be: “police depend heavily on the public to provide vital information about criminal or suspicious activities. In line with the foregoing, the necessity of an effective tool in monitoring and assessing the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Strategic Initiatives (Sis) led PRO-COR to the institutionalization of tools and utilization of available technology for regular monitoring and assessment (PRO-COR Performance Governance Report-Proficiency Stage, 2018). Being a trendsetter in terms of innovations and best practices, PRO-COR implemented the Web-Based Online Community Engagement Survey (WeBOCES) which is utilized as an internet/web-based community assessment of police performance satisfaction index, respect index, trust index and safety index. In this study, this got the lowest mean (M=3.8000, SD=.83274) among the indicators, although the value is still interpreted as highly effective. The lowest mean value implies that the initiative was not fully successful in capturing the perception of the community towards the PRO-COR personnel. The result can be attributed to the lack of internet access or connectivity in some parts of the region. Thus, to validate the results of WeBOCES, manual engagement surveys were conducted with the support of the Regional Advisory Council. T-test for independent samples revealed that there is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness of the police community relations activities as perceived by the two groups, t(228)=−0.075, p = .941 > .05. The result implies that PROCOR’s activities to develop the trust, respect, the feeling of safety and security, and the satisfaction among the communities it serves are equally effective from the viewpoints of both the Government and the stakeholders. The main reason could be the equal support extended by both RAC and C/PPOs in several joint police community-initiated activities.
Conclusion and Recommendations:

The results show that in general, crime prevention and solution, public safety and police community relations activities of PRO-COR were highly effective but the mean values did not fall under the highest scale of very highly effective. The results imply that all targets are accomplished, but the mission is not fully achieved in terms of preventing and controlling crimes, maintaining peace and order, and ensuring public safety and internal security with the active support of the community. Thus, despite the PNP PATROL Plan 2030 being implemented for nine years, the result of the survey connotes more concerted efforts from PRO-COR, the community, non-government organizations, and other concerned agencies to attain a Cordillera region that is safe to live, work and do business. Even if the resource management component of the PNP transformation program is met, the distinct geographical features of the region has to be considered. Further, the lack of fund to support community surveys and lack of knowledge of the community on the existence of Web-Based Online Community Engagement Survey (WeBOCES) resulted to its limited utilization. This consequently delimited PRO-COR’s source of valid and comprehensive community assessment of police performance satisfaction index, respect index, trust index and safety index. On a positive note, the increasing value on the safety, police performance satisfaction, trust and respect indices of the community towards the police leads to a safe conclusion that the bigger majority of the stakeholders in the Cordillera has a high perception towards their safety, they are satisfied towards the performance of their police, and they have a high percentage of trust and respect towards PRO-COR personnel.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended to optimize the use of financial resources to ensure technology is used to good effect, initiatives providing technology hardware or software must include provisions for training. Since specialized training is needed in search and rescue operations, training programs must be developed for emergency responders and community volunteers. Since it is important to regularly measure and evaluate the performance of policing services to ensure the performance of the service is in line with the objectives set out for it, Community Engagement Survey must be regularly conducted. Thus, appropriate budget must be allotted for this purpose. Another study must be conducted to validate the results of the current study particularly, involving a broader range of community members.

References:


