

Police service in the age of information technology

Produced by the Institute for Solidarity in Asia in partnership with the Center for International Private Enterprise

In its efforts to deliver better public service, the Philippine National Police (PNP) developed a plan to achieve its vision of becoming “a highly capable, effective and credible police service by 2030” and came up with a number of strategic initiatives in support of this end goal. Under the leadership of Police Director Benjamin B. Magalong, the Police Regional Office in Cordillera (PRO-COR) designed and piloted new electronic systems to improve the efficiency of PNP officers. By pursuing this initiative, the PNP was able to explore new frontiers in the age of information technology and practice innovation guided by the Institute for Solidarity in Asia’s (ISA) Performance Governance System (PGS).

In 2009, PNP began developing the “Peace and Order Agenda for Transformation and Upholding of the Rule-of-Law” (or “PATROL Plan”) as part of its transformation efforts. Magalong, now Director of PNP’s Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, believes that the PATROL Plan gives focus and prevents officers in positions of power from developing personality-based strategies and programs that harm the organization with constant policy changes. For him, it provides security because “all the programs and strategic initiatives PNP undertakes will also be carried out by succeeding administrations.”

In the beginning, many PRO-COR officers were skeptical about the PATROL Plan. As a change agenda it needed to be leadership driven, and Magalong recognized this. “To lead transformation, you should have the passion to carry it out and the credibility that will make people believe you,” he says. “It takes time for results to trickle down and be felt, but as a leader, you have to show something that will create optimism.”

To achieve this, Magalong and his team focused on two strategic outcomes: first, to improve the efficiency of day-to-day operations; and second, to provide each police officer and station with proper equipment. By prioritizing initiatives that would enable PRO-COR officers to carry out police operations with more efficiency

and strengthen regional trust, Magalong won buy-in for the PATROL Plan from the officers under his supervision.

A modern-day solution

Shifting to technology-assisted living was an easy decision. With no elevators in the building, Magalong recalls how tiresome it was for officers to carry piles of paper up and down the stairs several times a day to have documents reviewed and approved. It had also become costly to print documents throughout numerous revisions, cumbersome for supervisors to go through daily stacks of documents, and difficult to track and store paper files. Magalong, who was used to an electronic system from his time in the corporate world, brought his idea to the Dean of the St. Louis University in Baguio and together they developed plans to build the information technology (IT) infrastructure within PRO-COR.

Magalong then formed a team of PNP officers who would serve as the primary IT force for PRO-COR once they were trained by the university’s IT department. This successful collaboration allowed PRO-COR to develop a cost-effective IT infrastructure. The electronic system they now use handles four strategic areas — document management, procurement, e-learning, and crime mapping.

“It takes time for results to trickle down and be felt, but as a leader, you have to show something that will create optimism.”



Police Director Benjamin B. Magalong, 3rd from left, supervises PRO-COR officers as they test the e-learning system at Camp Bado Dangwa.

After several months of training and comprehensive strategic planning, PRO-COR was able to incorporate more electronic systems into their day-to-day operations. Each computer at regional headquarters is now equipped with a document management system (DMS) whose built-in approval function no longer makes it necessary to shuttle documents back and forth to the regional director. Customized access permissions are granted to ensure the confidentiality of sensitive documents in the system, and the activity of each user who accesses the system is logged. This mechanism makes it easier to track down sources of security breaches.

Supervising officers within PRO-COR are now also required to have access to their e-mails 24/7 so they can respond to requests, give updates, receive reports, and handle other immediate concerns. Since they are provided with the proper equipment, there is no excuse for them to be lax in their response time,

therefore increasing promptness and efficiency in serving the community.

Transforming through transparency

Another issue that has been crucial to PRO-COR operations is proper resource management. With an electronic system, the fund allocation process has become more transparent and efficient, making it easier for officers to feel the impact of executing the PATROL Plan. According to Magalong, the tendency of some leaders is to focus only on operationalizing police camps and forget about the individual needs of policemen. In the past, he has been approached by officers to ask how they can carry out their duties and believe in the goals of the PATROL Plan when they had not even been provided with their own guns. Magalong says, “A transparent system forces leaders to use funds properly, and one way to do this is by providing officers with adequate equipment.”

The initial skepticism surrounding the transformation program gradually turned into growing support because of early wins from the technology-based initiative. Acquiring necessary equipment that came from quality suppliers and fell within the budget became a top priority in PRO-COR and officers became more aware of what items and efforts were needed to maintain the new IT infrastructure.

The officers understand that it will take time before the IT system can become fully operational in other stations, which are also in need of equipment, but Magalong is confident that it can be achieved through greater transparency in the management of personnel and other resources.

Designed for learning

In the past, strategy was cascaded using flyers and other learning materials given out during lectures but it became evident that this method was not effective in educating officers in the lower ranks. This prompted PRO-COR to seek out a partnership with the University of Cordilleras and National Institute of Information Technology to develop a computer-based learning course. This e-learning system was designed to ensure that officers would become well versed in the PATROL Plan and other new policies. It is divided into six modules:

- (1) Integrated Transformation Plan - Performance Governance System
- (2) SWOT Analysis
- (3) Customer Analysis
- (4) GAP Analysis
- (5) Environmental Scanning
- (6) PNP Strategic Focus CODE-P

Learning is validated through a series of tests that require a passing rate of 75 to 85 % depending on the number of items. Passing these tests is mandatory for every leader and

officer. “The system was designed for them to learn and not to fail,” says Magalong. “There is no consequence for failing but there is a timeline and a target-passing rate set by each office. If they don’t meet the deadline, we investigate.” Officers receive certificates upon completing the course.

Still, there is a possibility that officers might forget what they have learned after passing the tests so PRO-COR is coming up with ways to refresh this course after the first round.

Using technology to fight crime

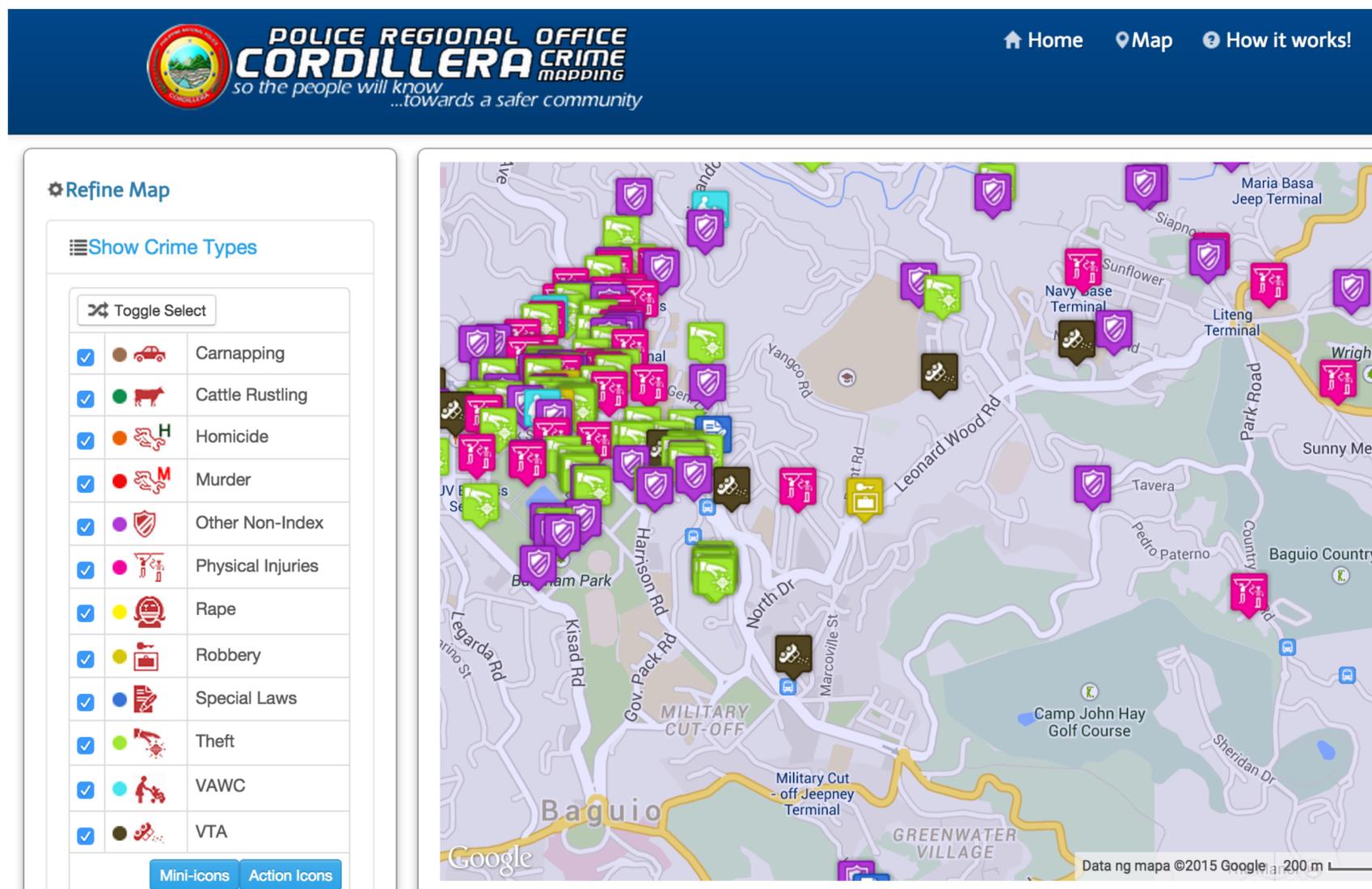
One of PRO-COR’s biggest innovations is the Geographic Information System-Based Crime Analysis (GIS-BCA), a tool used to analyze crime incidence and provide a logical basis for efficient and effective police interventions. GIS-BCA allows officers to identify crime hotspots using trends, patterns, and relationships, as well as areas where the police has already intervened. By observation, crime tends to shift in areas that experience police intervention.

PRO-COR’s pilot crime map is regularly updated and available for viewing through [http://procor.pnp.gov.ph /crimemap/](http://procor.pnp.gov.ph/crimemap/). PNP’s official website also shows a crime map for Metro Manila where it is possible to search for areas of crime by date and offense. It can be viewed through <http://crimemaps.pnp.gov.ph/>.

Since their system is wide-scale and online, PRO-COR is able to maintain 100% accuracy in terms of reported and detected crimes in the Cordillera region. There is no room for empty or untruthful reports from field commanders since the data cannot be tampered with or manipulated. Because GIS-BCA can provide quick and intuitive analysis and capture best practices in police intervention, officers are able to devise better strategies for future crime interventions.

“Since they are provided with the proper equipment, there is no excuse for them to be lax in their response time, therefore increasing promptness and efficiency in serving the community.”

“With the help of advanced technology, police officers have been able to perform their jobs well and therefore provide the community with a sense of security.”



A screenshot of the Cordillera region crime map, whose technology is now also used in PNP's Metro Manila headquarters.

With the help of advanced technology, police officers have been able to perform their jobs well and therefore provide the community with a sense of security. The involvement of the community itself is also a crucial part of maintaining peace and order. Using information gathered from the crime-mapping system, PRO-COR organizes seminars to inform citizens of the various modus operandi prevalent in their areas. In this way, the initiative is able to contribute toward the PATROL Plan objective “to improve community safety awareness through community-oriented and human rights-based policing.”

PRO-COR has also set up a computer-based feedback mechanism through which external stakeholders in the community can air out concerns, moving on from the previous practice of having visitors to police stations ring a bell to indicate that they had experienced good service. This new mechanism feeds into the Community Participation Index, a quantifiable way of

measuring community satisfaction with police service. It includes a question and answer form that can readily assess satisfaction. The form, which is simple and easy to use, can be accessed in three languages—English, Filipino, and the regional dialect Ilocano—such that it caters to as many people as possible.

Breaking down silos

For a large organization like PNP, whose full force is 150,000 strong, it can be difficult to manage network operations, but the support and innovation of regional offices brightens its prospects. PRO-COR's success in piloting new electronic systems can also be attributed to the fact that it maintains a close working relationship with the Center for Police Strategy Management (CPSM). PRO-COR was among one of the first offices to pioneer its regional counterpart, called the “Regional Police Strategy Management Unit” (RPSMU).

Beyond the basic monitoring and evaluating techniques, the RPSMU collaborates with the entire PRO-COR to think of more ways to improve performance. Magalong mentions “Outlook”, a monitoring mechanism they developed that is similar to a business review. In the case of PRO-COR, it is held twice a year in May and September to assess operations and plan for year-end targets.

This review also takes note of the individual performance dashboards each officer is required to create. These dashboards, which allow officers to visualize their individual roles in the PATROL Plan, are monitored using the IT system and used as a basis for performance-based bonuses.

Sustaining the PATROL Plan

Most organizations face the challenge of continuing strategy implementation despite changes in leadership. The rapid turn-around rate of police officials also makes it necessary for PNP to ensure that there are mechanisms in place that can prevent successful initiatives like PRO-COR’s IT system from being dissolved.

In addition to the RPSMU, whose job is to safeguard the strategy, PRO-COR has also created a change management program that can prepare

future leaders to take over and further innovate on systems and processes established under the PATROL Plan. Magalong, who was crucial in pushing for the development and implementation of the IT system, refuses to claim the success of PRO-COR as his own. Instead, he acknowledges the ideas and initiatives of other police officers and the efficient training of officers on the ground who could be trusted with important tasks.

Magalong, who advises other organizations looking to replicate initiatives like PRO-COR’s IT system to be patient with the trial-and-error process, believes that the ultimate measure of the success of the PATROL Plan is community satisfaction. “We used to base our success on the number of syndicates neutralized or partners accounted for, but at the end of the day we must ask ourselves, is the community satisfied? No matter how much we accomplish, if people are not satisfied with our service, we still fail,” he explains. “With the PATROL Plan, we are pushing for community satisfaction and that is the paradigm shift. It’s not about favoritism. It’s about credibility. It’s about meritocracy. This is what all police officers should see.”

For more information on the PATROL Plan visit <http://pnp.gov.ph/> and <http://www.cpsm.ph/>.



Magalong demonstrating the crime map system to former Police Director General Nicanor A Bartolome at Camp Bado Dangwa in Benguet.

References:

1. Magalong, Benjamin B. "Interview with the Philippine National Police - Regional Office Cordillera." Personal interview. May 2013.
2. Our Vision. (2013). Retrieved May 26, 2013, from Police Regional Office Cordillera Web site: http://www.procor.pnp.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=122:our-vision&catid=52:about-the-philippine-national-police&Itemid=77
3. Philippine National Police. (2013). Performance Governance Report. Quezon: Philippine National Police
4. The PNP Charter Statement. (2012). Retrieved May 26, 2013, from Center for Police Strategy Management Web site: <http://www.cpsm.ph/pnp-charter-statement.xml>
5. The CIDG Crime Map. 2012. Retrieved Feb 26, 2015, from PRO-COR Web site: <http://procor.pnp.gov.ph/crimemap/map.php>



© 2015 Institute for Solidarity in Asia

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the editor, except in the case of non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For comments or permission requests kindly write to Marielle Antonio at news@isacenter.org or visit www.isacenter.org.

14th Floor Trident Tower
312 Senator Gil Puyat Avenue
Makati City, Philippines 1200

Editorial Adviser
Lloyd Bautista, Ph.D.

Executive Editor
Marielle Antonio

Associate Editor
Isabel Camus

Words and Research
Nichole Lanuza

Photos
Philippine National Police

Acknowledgments
Philippine National Police
Police Regional Office - Cordillera