A Case Study On Implan Bumadang: Investigating Its Impact On Building Trust And Enhancing Public Safety

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Abstract

The principles of community-oriented policing emphasize the shared responsibility between law enforcement and the community in maintaining peace and order. In Benguet province, the Benguet Police Provincial Office launched IMPLAN Bumadang, a community outreach program focused on pro-poor projects to foster participatory development. This study aims to explore how the officers planned and carried out the program and examine the subsequent effects on the target community. The research utilized a qualitative case study design. Purposive sampling was employed to select six police officers from the 1st Benguet Provincial Mobile Force Company and six community members who had knowledge of and benefited from the project. Major findings indicated that police officers encountered challenges in implementation, including identifying diverse community needs, resource allocation (due to lack of specific funds), and difficult terrain access. However, successful implementation led to a sense of fulfillment for the officers. The study also found that the community experienced a sense of vulnerability before the program, particularly due to a lack of lighting. After the implementation of "IMPLAN Bumadang," specifically the "Pailaw Project," the community reported improved safety and stronger police-community relations. The conclusions underscore that effective planning considers diverse needs and security, and successful organization requires supportive stakeholders and teamwork.

Keywords: Community policing, Implan Bumadang, Law Enforcement, Public Safety

INTRODUCTION

Globally, law enforcement agencies are adopting community-oriented policing to improve public safety and build trust (Gill et al, 2023). Robert Peel's principle stated that policing is a shared responsibility, emphasizing that law enforcement is an integral part of the community, not an external force. Effective policing necessitates cooperation and trust from the public to lead to safer neighborhoods and more effective crime prevention. However, a significant problem persists where the connection between police and society is not always harmonious, leading to distrust, anger, and fear among citizens and a potential increase in crime rates.

In the community, the role of police officers is very significant. It is because societies rely on police forces in which police are required, as a matter of policy, to "protect

and serve" the community citizens. On the other hand, the police often rely on assistance and cooperation from the community. The problem is that the police and society's connection is not always harmonious, raising the crime rate. This is because people do not have faith that the police are fair and impartial; while the police feel threatened by the citizens. The key elements for policing identified above are not new. The most recent version of neighborhood law enforcement is part of a much more extensive history of community-based policing programs established in several countries for more than three decades (Franco et

al., 2020). Community-oriented policing is an approach in which the police involve citizens in a working relationship to minimize crime and improve public safety by recognizing and reducing community conditions that promote crime (Kash, 2020). Community outreach programs are a component of community policing, designed to foster positive relationships, increased cooperation, and information sharing for more effective policing. These programs vary in form, addressing specific community needs (Zafra, n.d.).

Internationally, models like the old beat cop in the US emphasized proactive engagement, though they faced criticisms regarding reliance on individual skills and potential for bias (Franco et al., 2020). India's Friends of Police (FOP) program showcased volunteer-based assistance in maintaining order and preventing crime, despite facing challenges in accountability (Mousapour, 2022). FOP volunteers participate in a range of activities, including patrolling, traffic management, and community outreach.

The program has been credited with improving police-community relations and enhancing public safety, but also
faces challenges in ensuring the accountability and effectiveness of its large volunteer force (Verma et al, 2012).

Through outreach, community-oriented policing is practiced. Barreto (2022) emphasized the need for police departments to create opportunities for regular interaction with community members through community meetings, neighborhood watch programs, citizen academies, and youth engagement initiatives While police outreach programs offer numerous benefits, implementing and sustaining them can be challenging (Barreto, 2022).
For instance, Verma et al. (n.d) found that police departments often face
budget constraints, which may limit their capacity to dedicate sufficient funding and personnel to outreach programs. In addition, some police officers resist community- oriented approaches. Changing mindsets and fostering a culture of community engagement within police departments requires dedicated training and leadership.

In the Philippines, the Philippine National Police (PNP) is mandated to maintain peace, order, and public safety. Under the Sec. 2 of RA 6975 as amended, empowers the DILG establish a bolster of a system of coordination and cooperation among the citizenry, local executives and the integrated law enforcement and public safety agencies. Laws empower the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to establish coordination and cooperation systems among citizens, local executives, and law enforcement agencies through Community and Service-Oriented Policing (CSOP) programs (PNP-PCR Manual, 2012). The PNP's 10-year Integrated Transformation Program (PNP-ITP), launched in 2005, and its P.A.T.R.O.L. Plan 2030 framework, aim to transform the PNP into a capable, effective, and credible police service that earns community trust and respect. These initiatives emphasize community engagement, improved police responsiveness, and accountability. The CSOP system is specifically designed to strengthen local government capability for effective basic service delivery to citizens through collaboration and sharing of resources. The PNP's Directorate for Community Affairs and Development (DCAD) is tasked with complying with CSOP requirements and receives priority funding (NAPOLCOM Resolution Number 2015-342).

Examples of PNP outreach programs include the "Project *Kabadang*" (*Kalinga at Pagmamahal sa Kababayan, Biyayang Alay ng Kapulisan*) of Kalinga Police Provincial Office (KPPO). This project features community outreach and informative lectures on crime prevention and public safety (Serion, 2024). In addition, the Apayao Police Provincial Office (APPO) conducted an outreach program to inspire participation in the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), advocating for gender equality.

In Benguet Province, the Benguet Police Provincial Office (BPPO) formulated IMPLAN *Bumadang*. This implementation plan aims to synchronize and harmonize efforts through pro-poor projects, showcasing voluntary help ("*Bumadang*") in support of participatory community development. The goal is to involve community members as active partners, not passive recipients, in addressing the root causes of criminality, insurgency, and poverty, especially in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs). IMPLAN Bumadang aligns with former PNP Chief PGEN Rodolfo S. Azurin Jr.'s "MKK=K" peace framework ("*Malasakit + Kaayusan + Kapayapaan = Kaunlaran*") and NAPOLCOM Resolution No. 2015-342 on the CSOP System. The BPPO, in coordination with various advisory groups, local government units (LGUs), and other agencies, is the lead in implementing its objectives, which include internal security, crime prevention, police enhancement training, and social services. Notable projects under IMPLAN Bumadang include a P0.7 million House Repair Project benefitting 32 families and a P0.3 million "Pailaw Project" benefitting 924 individuals, with specific examples in Tublay and Mankayan. The "Pailaw Project" provides solar lights to illuminate roads/pathways, enhancing safety and preventing crime (Myles, 2023).

However, there are only few studies have explored the effects of outreach programs on enhancing peace and order, leaving a significant gap in our understanding of effective practices. By addressing this gap, the research aims to guide the Benguet Provincial Mobile Force Company unit in planning and implementing future outreach programs, while contributing to the transformation of the police

organization into a highly capable, effective, and credible service that fosters respect, trust, and appreciation within the community. Additionally, the research seeks to strengthen partnerships with all stakeholders to create a safer environment for living, working, and conducting business, ultimately contributing to safer communities and enhancing opportunities for productive work and improved quality of life, particularly in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs).

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative study that employs a case study design. The core of a case study involves an in-depth description and analysis of a "bound unit," (Cutler et al., 2021; Creswell, 2012) which in this research is IMPLAN "Bumadang". The choice of this design is crucial because IMPLAN "Bumadang" is a contextual and structured intervention. To fully understand its implementation, the study needs to capture both the procedural and experiential dimensions from the perspectives of those directly involved. This includes investigating how police officers planned and carried out the program, and examining its subsequent effects on the target community.

The study focuses on the 1st Benguet Provincial Mobile Force Company and its target communities. Purposive sampling was adopted for participant selection. This non-probability sampling technique is used to select individuals or groups that meet specific criteria relevant to the research questions (Hassan et al., 2023).

The participant selection for this study was based on specific criteria to ensure the relevancy and competency of the results. For the police officers, the selection focused on those with 3–5 years of experience in conducting community outreach programs, specifically those assigned to the 1st Benguet Provincial Mobile Force Company and designated as Community Affairs Section (CAS) PNCO or team members with sufficient experience to share. A total of six police officers were selected as participants. Similarly, community members were chosen based on their roles as barangay officials or community members who had knowledge of and had benefited from the project implementation. Six community members were selected as participants to provide a well-rounded perspective. This careful selection ensures that the participants' experiences and insights are relevant to the research focus, allowing for meaningful data collection and analysis.

The study employed a qualitative research design, utilizing an interview guide as the primary data gathering tool. In line with hermeneutic phenomenology, which focuses on understanding individuals' lived experiences and interpretations, a variety of data collection methods were utilized. These included in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and questionnaires with open-ended questions. Each method was designed to capture personalized interpretations of the participants' experiences within the context of the study, allowing for a deeper understanding of their perspectives and insights.

The data gathering procedure was conducted systematically to ensure access to the research site and cooperation from participants. The first step involved preparing necessary documents, including a letter from the research adviser and department, a letter for the Force Commander of the 1st Benguet Provincial Mobile Force Company, and a consent form for participants. These documents were essential to establish the researcher's authority and ensure that the study followed appropriate protocols. Informed consent was then obtained from participants before recording the interviews, with an audio recorder used to capture the responses. To protect the participants' identities, aliases were used if individuals preferred not to disclose their real names. Additionally, the researcher took measures to secure the transcribed data by storing computer files in an encrypted format, ensuring the protection of sensitive information.

For data analysis, the study employed Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis approach, a widely recognized method for analyzing qualitative data. The first step, familiarization, involved reviewing the data to gain an initial understanding. The researcher then proceeded to coding, where specific textual elements, such as phrases or sentences, were identified and marked, with corresponding codes assigned to represent the information. The next step, theme generation, involved reviewing the codes to identify trends and developing initial themes. The themes were then reviewed to ensure they accurately represented the data. Afterward, each theme was clearly defined and named, ensuring that the meaning

and relevance to the data were precise. Finally, the researcher wrote a comprehensive report detailing the analysis process and findings.

Ethical considerations were carefully integrated throughout the research process. The researcher ensured informed consent by obtaining permission from participants before recording their interviews. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained by using aliases when requested. Additionally, the data was secured using encrypted files to prevent unauthorized access, ensuring the privacy of participants' responses. These ethical measures were integral to ensuring the integrity and trustworthiness of the research process.

RESULTS

The following themes were generated from the interviews conducted regarding the experiences of the police officers in implementing the IMPLAN *Bumadang.*

Planning of the IMPLAN *Bumadang*

Police officers' planning began with active communication with community leaders, elders, and residents to assess needs. This ensures effective resource allocation and program development. As shared:

P1: "We talk to community leaders, elders, and other people to find out what the community needs before we plan."

P3: "The needs of the community were assessed through series of dialogue and coordination from the ordinary resident, barangay officials, social workers and other stakeholders."

Considerations for planning included target individuals, location, available funds, the number of beneficiaries, budget, and manpower to ensure assistance reaches those most in need.

P3: "By considering factors such as target individuals, location, available funds provide assistance to those who need it most."

P4: "The considerations were taken into account when planning is the number of beneficiaries, their location/address, budget and manpower."

Security was a basic consideration in choosing project locations, involving assessing potential threats, the number of people involved, and timing. This also includes considering the history of target individuals regarding influence from extremist groups. These are evident in the statements below:

P4: "The considerations were taken when planning was the security of the place, the number target of individuals/people and the date that will implement."

P5: "For the target individual, we consider their history, if they were formerly influenced by Communist Terrorist Group (CTG) or the community they belong."

Further, division of labor is also observed. Tasks were assigned based on individual skills and capabilities to optimize efficiency in implementation, such as wiring or construction work.

P4: "Among the personnel, we determined their skill sets and assigned them tasks based on their capabilities."

P5: "The tasking was organized according to the capabilities of each personnel such as in wirings, construction works and others."

In summary, the planning process was thorough, considering factors such as community needs, security, resources, and the division of labor to ensure the success and safety of the outreach programs.

Challenges in the implementation of the IMPLAN *Bumadang*

A significant challenge was the absence of allocated funds, necessitating partnerships with other organizations and stakeholders to secure resources. As reflected in the following statements:

P3: "The challenges that we encounter was how will it successfully be implemented and where to get funds."

P4: "There are no specific funds allocated for this project, and collaboration with CAGPTD, DSWD, NGO, and other stakeholders must be considered and incorporated to successfully implement the projects."

Moreover, another challenge encountered was the difficulty in visiting and transporting materials to some areas due to challenging terrain, sometimes requiring manual transport by foot.

P1: "Some places are not that easy to visit."

P2: "The terrain is one of the challenges, where at some instance we have to transport the goods/materials by foot."

Community empowerment and engagement

The project fostered teamwork and cooperation between the PNP and the community, reflecting the traditional "*binnadang*" (mutual aid and cooperation) spirit of the Igorots. This demonstrated government dedication to serving remote areas.

P3: "The PNP brought together community members in a united effort of teamwork and cooperation."

P6: "We have shown to the community and nearby areas that the government is dedicated to deliver basic services even at the far flung and within the boundaries which the insurgents used to occupy."

Thus, the police officers experienced a deep sense of satisfaction and emotional reward from helping the community and witnessing the gratitude of beneficiaries, beyond just successful project completion.

P4: "Though the implementation is challenging, in the end the smile and gratitude of the beneficiaries is enough for our success."

P5: "Helping someone feels good, particularly when you've poured your heart into the project."

With these, there was a positive shift in cooperation and trust between the community and the police after the program's implementation, with community members expressing increased trust due to improved collaboration.

CM 1: "Yes, the cooperation between the community and police has increased."

CM 2: "My trust in the police was increased because the Pailaw Project Program and outreach programs have led to better collaboration between police and community."

The Pailaw Project, part of IMPLAN Bumadang, enhanced safety and convenience through improved lighting, particularly for students walking home and individuals returning late from farms.

Thus, community members requested more lighting projects (Pailaw Projects/solar lights) and seminars on crucial social issues like Women and Child Abuse, indicating a desire and support for holistic community well-being initiatives.

Overall, despite the challenges faced, the project successfully strengthened the relationship between the police and the community, fostering trust, cooperation, and a sense of shared responsibility. The positive outcomes, such as improved safety and community engagement, have inspired further support for similar initiatives, reflecting the community's desire for continued growth and well-being.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results presented, police officers emphasized the importance of communicating with community leaders, elders, and residents to determine specific community needs before planning projects. This includes assessing the unique needs of different barangays within their area of responsibility. The process begins with active listening and engagement, avoiding assumptions about what the community requires.

This aligns with the concept of community needs assessment, which involves collecting data and surveying stakeholders to understand service gaps, strengths, and available assets within a community (Walters, 2020). Need identification and assessment are integral to human service planning, where planners prioritize identified needs based on importance, available resources, and service technology (Siegel, n.d.). Additionally, basic consideration in selecting project locations was site security, including assessing the physical environment, the number of people involved, and the timing of implementation. Additionally, when assessing target individuals, police officers considered their history, particularly any past affiliations with extremist groups (Communist Terrorist Group - CTG), and their community context, to develop effective security measures.

Being security conscious is paramount in combating criminal activities that disrupt peace and hinder development, empowering individuals with knowledge to protect themselves and their communities (Liberty, 2021). The best way to prevent dangerous situations is to be security conscious. Maintaining internal security is a primary function of a mobile force company, broadly defined as keeping peace within

a sovereign state's borders by upholding national law and defending against internal threats (Katoch, 2016).

In organizing tasks, police officers assigned responsibilities based on individuals' skills and capabilities, such as wiring or construction work. Tasks were disseminated to each personnel, ensuring that each member had a unique yet interconnected role, contributing to a powerful and effective outreach effort. Employee self-selection for work can be more effective than traditional methods when employees are highly skilled in limited areas, jobs are divisible, and availability is unpredictable (Raveendra, 2022). When workers specialize in a single task, they can master it more efficiently, improving production times and fostering collaboration among experts. This focused approach also allows for quicker training and skill mastery, though it may require a larger workforce.

Finally, as presented, the IMPLAN *Bumadang* project fostered teamwork and cooperation between the PNP and the community, reflecting the traditional "binnadang" spirit of mutual aid and cooperation among Igorot ethnic groups. Through collaborative actions, police and community members built common goals to achieve a safer community.

Community empowerment, characterized by authority, confidence, trust, opportunities, responsibilities, and support, significantly improves food security in rural areas (Shobachiyah, 2024). It also contributes positively to increasing economic productivity and improving environmental quality for sustainable management of slum settlements. Community empowerment is a fundamental concept in health promotion, helping communities define priorities and develop strategies to improve health and minimize inequalities (Kruahong et al,2023).

IMPLAN Bumadang served as a way for police to communicate with the community through providing assistance, demonstrating that the government is dedicated to delivering basic services even in far-flung and insurgent-occupied areas. This positive engagement contributes to countering insurgency in the province (Gray, 2024).

In summary, the study highlights that IMPLAN Bumadang has had a positive impact on community safety and police-community relations, despite challenges related to resources and terrain. The findings are consistently supported by existing literature on community policing, stakeholder engagement, resource management, and social development.

CONCLUSION

The study draws the following conclusions from the narratives of police officers and community members involved in the IMPLAN Bumadang program: Planning for the program involves considering diverse needs, identifying target individuals, ensuring site security, assessing terrain challenges, and evaluating available resources. Supportive stakeholders and community members are crucial for the successful organization of the program. Effective project implementation necessitates strong teamwork between police officers and community members, with tasks distributed based on individual skills, leveraging a division of labor. Police officers involved in the implementation experienced a sense of fulfillment as an emotional response beyond the successful completion of the projects. The IMPLAN Bumadang initiative also serves as a positive engagement strategy for countering insurgency in the province. Before the implementation of the "Pailaw Project," which is related to IMPLAN Bumadang, the community felt unsafe and insecure, primarily due to environmental vulnerabilities like the lack of lighting on roads and pathways. The implementation of the program resulted in improved community safety and stronger police-community relations. However, the community has requested further initiatives to enhance their well-being, such as seminars regarding crimes against women and children.

Recommendations:

Based on these findings, the researcher humbly recommends the following: First, the police are encouraged to continue strengthening their collaboration with stakeholders and the community to foster better relationships, ensuring sustained support for sustainable project development, improved crime prevention (especially in countering insurgency), and effective crime solutions for the betterment of the community. Additionally, the police should further implement IMPLAN Bumadang initiatives, particularly the "Pailaw Projects," to continue improving community safety and creating a safer environment. Further community engagements and seminars should also be conducted on topics related

to community well-being, such as Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children, and other relevant laws to promote awareness. Finally, community members are encouraged to voluntarily support Philippine National Police (PNP) projects to promote a symbiotic relationship for crime prevention and a safer environment.

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