



CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN MINDANAO

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE OF THE POLICE AND ENHANCING COMMUNITY POLICE RELATIONS IN THE ARMM PROJECT

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

The police in the ARMM do not have adequate resources. They are poorly trained and equipped, and, in most cases, there are too few police to do the job. In the municipality of Sultan Mastura in Maguindanao, for example, the ratio of police to the population is 1: 2,833.

The police often are closely associated with the military in the conduct of counter-insurgency campaigns and a historical legacy of human rights violations. Moreover, there is a widespread perception that the police are corrupt, further damaging public trust.

Although the local government code provides mechanisms to hold the police accountable to the communities in which they serve, communities tend to have little experience in doing so. Local governments in the ARMM generally do not have the capacity to oversee the work of the police operating in their jurisdictions. Oversight of the police, where it does exist, is usually not transparent or part of a democratic process open for public input or scrutiny.

This project seeks to address the key problems affecting policing in the ARMM, including police unresponsiveness to the security concerns of ARMM communities, police corruption, police involvement in human rights abuses, and a governance system that is not accustomed to holding the police accountable for doing their job.

GOAL

To promote good governance by supporting a close relationship between communities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and the Philippine National Police (PNP).

OBJECTIVES

This community policing project is implemented by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) with funding from USAID, and has the following objectives:

- To help the ARMM regional government develop policies on community policing and civilian oversight of the police for the PNP Regional Command for the ARMM;
- To develop a publicly responsive and accountable civilian police force;
- To improve community-police relations in three pilot areas in the ARMM.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project has the following project activities:

Regional Level

Development of a community policing training group for the ARMM - This primarily consists of training of trainers on community policing in coordination with the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Technical assistance to NAPOLCOM and PNP ARMM – This consists of providing training to NAPOLCOM and PNP ARMM on community relations building.

Information dissemination on community policing – This includes developing and circulating reference materials on community policing in the ARMM and assisting local media organizations to feature community policing in their reporting.

Orientation and education programs for ARMM governors and mayors – This consists of orientation programs for local chief executives, particularly their roles and responsibilities as deputies of NAPOLCOM in the ARMM in ensuring police accountability.

Research and data banking – This includes monitoring visits, interviews, focus group discussions and surveys to assess the success of community policing.



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PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

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Local (Municipal and Barangay Levels) Level

Peace and order/public safety assessment and planning – This includes in-depth research on citizens' perceptions of law enforcement and security issues in the three pilot municipalities.

Development of a three-year community policing plan – This includes assisting municipal peace and order councils (MPOCs) and NAPOLCOM to formulate and implement detailed and concrete community policing plans that outline actions for both the police and the community.

Capacity building for community policing – This includes training activities that cover strategic planning, role clarification, program planning, project development, data gathering, monitoring and evaluation, facilitation methods, advocacy and resource mobilization.

Community education sessions/facilitation of consultations – This entails helping MOPCs and communities gain access to information about community policing, exchange information and engage other stakeholders.

Strengthening of civilian oversight mechanisms – This includes technical assistance to NAPOLCOM and members of MOPCS to strengthen civilian oversight of the police (e.g. creation of People's Law Enforcement Boards).

ACHIEVEMENTS

Project accomplishments include the following:

- In the pilot sites, the municipalities of Upi, Barira and Guindulungan, the project has succeeded in instituting a collaborative public safety planning process that has benefited from substantial citizen inputs.
- Local capacities in community policing have been enhanced. The existing citizen-police core team can be tapped to coach other LGUs in the ARMM interested in replicating community policing.
- The growing trust of citizens in the pilot sites in the police is evident. There is also growing evidence of changes in attitude and behavior towards citizens among members of the PNP in the pilot sites.
- Higher level agencies like the ARMM regional government, DILG, NAPOLCOM and the PNP are coordinating efforts for community policing and are supportive of replication in the ARMM.
- There is a growing interest among municipalities in the ARMM in community policing.

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