

## URBAN SUSTAINABILITY ON SECURITY, A CASE STUDY PROGRAM BY RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION (RA) AND POLIS DIRAJA MALAYSIA (PDRM)

Alwin Long,  
LESTARI,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia  
Email: alwin\_long@hotmail.com

Azimin Tazilan  
Faculty of Engineering & Build Environment,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia  
Email: azimintazilan@gmail.com

Sharina Halim  
LESTARI,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia  
Email: sharinahalim@ukm.edu.my

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### ABSTRACT

*Fear of crime was all time high even though reports pertaining crime rate declined by 12%. Many point fingers toward the authority especially the Malaysian police forces while others blame it on individualistic lifestyle of urbanites. Limited interactions among one another and with the authorities within a locality contributed greatly to this phenomenon. Thus the establishment of an important division in 2014 to fill a large gap through crime prevention and community engagement called Jabatan Pencegahan Jenayah & Keselamatan Komuniti (JPJKK). Many activities were lined up to combat organized crime, which contributed to the decline yet sustainability on security is another chapter altogether. Constructing a synergistic program to make their services felt remained a challenge. Security needs and priorities were analyzed to better evaluate needs to restore this cavity. Cognitive interview with focus group of the Residents' Association (RA) were conducted to gain empathy on grassroots community's needs in creating a secure environment. The program efficacy requires contribution from all stakeholders and long-term commitment. The result will benefit all stakeholders such as the general public, academicians, government and PDRM to design more inclusive programs that will promote sustainable security in Malaysia.*

**KEYWORDS:** Crime Prevention, Community Engagement, RA, PDRM

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### 1. INTRODUCTION: Security and Sustainability

Sustainable cities are built upon sustainable communities. In most cases, achieving sustainability is closely related to green building, renewable energy, and lower carbon footprint, making the core component of the social end of the equation underserved. Hence many initiatives were lost in translation with regards to sustainability. In the midst of divergence, certainly the requirement is to be able to meet long-term sustainability that converges upon the fundamental principles of a triple bottom line of people, planet and profit.

Urbanization is the antitype to sustainable living under the evaluation of many experts. However it is an inevitable phenomenon due to the unbalanced focus on profitability, which draws many people to be concentrated living in cities. Researchers are now putting more emphasis on sustainable cities or livable cities with a larger boundary that covers security. Many would leave this area to the traditional law enforcement agencies and skip this topic altogether (Manallyo 2016). Yet published crime rates maneuver urbanites to take active participation in containing security for themselves and their loved ones.

The current urban residential security needs prior to victimization are commonly addressed through passive method such as gated and guarded locality (Sakip et al. n.d.; Rasidah et al. 2012). Security collaborative measures such as the case study above provides additional advantages through community inclusiveness. The present paper's intention is to cover a wide series of evidences and vital signs in supporting active living as a mean to a sustainable secure community. The intention of this research is to laud the effectiveness on collaborative method used by a specific urban community in creating a safe and secure environment. One key difference to this research is to qualify the importance on authority in the form of police force amalgamation to combat crime. This paper also examines the significance of police forces support in crime prevention. By using the result from this research, it is highly possible to replicate a sustainable process or methodology to increase community confidence on effective crime prevention in any particular neighborhood. Citing the framework presented by Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and John E. Eck, shown in figure 1, this research has higher emphasis on the physical activity that involves beyond the local community's ability alone.

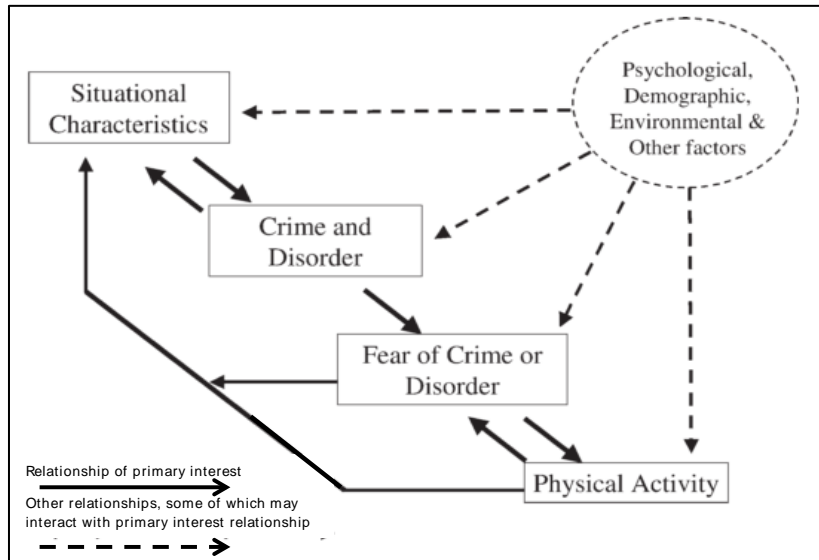


Figure 1: How crime may influence physical Activity

## 2. Research peripheries: IPD Serdang and the Community

Bandar Kinrara, Puchong of Selangor is a community under the municipal of Serdang, with a development area of 1904-acre undulating freehold land. It was launched in 1991 and is now approximately 80% developed (INP developer website). This integrated township is strategically located midway between Kuala Lumpur and Puchong. The specific community sampled for this research has approximately 576 homes and a strong Residence Association (RA) with 10 dedicated committee members.

The novelty of the research is the collaborative relationship between the community and police forces. Residents may act as eyes and ears to the police forces specifically to prevent crime from happening. In any local community, the residents are aware to strangers that post as threat and alert the police prior to crime occurrence. It is therefore argued here that police performance in deterring criminal activities correlates with the level at which local communities are involved and participate in crime prevention activities (Manallyo 2016). It was evident that the implementation of community policing in Malaysia, most communities accept the concept of good police cooperation and community in reducing crime (Sulaiman A.H. 2012).

### 2.1 PDRM, Royal Malaysia Police, IPD Serdang

Crimes are associated with the victims, the offenders and the enforcement agencies. For the study of crime prevention, this paper will be covering two stakeholders namely the potential victim and the enforcement agencies. Thus PDRM is the best enforcement agencies selection for crime related studies.

The area of research was conducted within the Police Department district office or locally known as the “*Ibu Pejabat Daerah (IPD) Serdang*”, a locality under Selangor, which constitute within the greater KL development region. The district office is commanding approximately seven Police stations or better known as *Balai Polis* and one police booth or *Pondok Polis* with a total arm force not exceeding 300 personnel and 70 police volunteer reserved. The area governed by the district office is approximately ten kilometers squared. The Crime Prevention and Community Safety Department of PDRM or *Jabatan Pencegahan Jenayah and Keselamatan Kummuniti* (JPJKK) in Bahasa Malaysia to focus on the wellbeing and safety aspects of the society through a more strategic, productive and integrated approach in reducing crime. Established in 2014, an evocative unit is slowly transforming the blue uniformed personnel to be more engaging to ensure better understanding and trust. The active crime prevention units such as the Mobile Patrol Vehicles (MPVs) Units, Motorcycle Patrolling Units (URBs) and, the Police Volunteer Reserve (PVR) Unit were the main pillars used to uphold the department’s goals. PVR is the core support group in this research program by creating the omnipresence effect for the community.

### 2.2 The community, Bandar Kinrara’s Residents Association(RA)

Having a strategic location with many entre-points, the residential area bustle with activities also making this community facing difficulty to implement a gated and guarded community. Hence the active approach was the best alternative after the enactment of the RA in 2002. As recalled by interviewees, crime rates were high with reported crime almost on weekly basis. Residents were concerned and started the movement through active patrolling and later on with police force. Crime rates drop instantaneously. Seeing the success of this initiative, the RA decided to embrace the program that lasted until this day.

Primarily crime prevention actions taken were certainly through the broken window phenomenon, environmental design and active living. Some key visible characteristic enhancement was the additional streetlights within the community and vacant houses are kept tidy. Based on the RA account, a total of 32 new streetlights were added to improve the luminance as a form of crime deterrence.

In order to increase community bond, the RA introduced other attractions through sports activities, mini zoos and archery tournaments to help build this active living concept in crime prevention. Overtime things evolved as the children grew up; maintaining programs like that became more difficult. Gradually the activities were transformed from community building into a crime prevention themed program.

### **3. Methodology**

The selection of this community was motivated by the RA's good relationship with the police force. Bandar Kinrara has high accessibility with many artery roads linking the community to highways making the locality but not the specific community amongst the crime hot spot in Selangor, Malaysia.

Initially the intention is to gain at least 30% of the residents population for the survey. However due to limited participation by the general community, the research was later performed on a focus group method. The focus group comprised of six community leaders, seven residents and three police officers.

Structured and unstructured data were gathered that was later translated into statistics to help readers evaluate the intellect behind community cohesiveness in running security programs. The questionnaires were classified under the following clustered themes 1) fear of crime 2) crime prevention 3) active living as a sustainable solution in curbing crime within the urban setting. Quantitative and Qualitative research methods were deployed citing comprehensive questioners. The questions were phrased using multi stage where positive and direct questions were used follow by cognitive questions that require additional perceptive consideration to answer. The research questions were post in a way to safe guard consistency in respondents' answers.

#### **4.1 Data collection: Fear of crime**

Fear of crime related to perception of crime fast becoming the common disease crippling most urbanites. It is a feeling of emotions that does not have any linkage to victimization. This was since the rising fear of crime amongst residents who feel that they are constantly at risk (Nasar & Jones, 1997). It still ambiguous if feared places are indeed the most threatening spaces said Anastasia and John in their research. This feeling is rather not cognitive but absorbed, combining information, data, not necessarily related to time and place in cultivating that thought that many a times paralyze the subject. How can anyone combat this unseen enemy? The data and analysis for the research is to help shed lights to how the environment, news and social may bring some novel consciousness to this common nemesis. Fear of crime builds upon shadows of emotions related to traumatic experiences be it experiential or mere perception co related with situation and condition (cite ). The impact on fear of crime can be somewhat controlled under different environment and in these sets of questionnaires encroach on the following situations a) an active community b) presence of police officers.

##### **4.1.1 Fear of crime: Personal, Community and with PDRM personnel**

The research questions were posted with progression in mind. Respondents were led from personal parameter and slowly being led into personal properties and later the larger community. Stark and vivid outcome, urban Malaysians is a terrified lot. 55% of the respondents that represents the middle income wage for urban Malaysians are afraid of walking alone in dark places regardless of the situation leading towards the hypothesis nurtured by poor ecosystem to restraint fear of crime. Many a times, fear of crime statistics were used as a yardstick in measuring authority's effectiveness in crime busting. Yet fear of crime has no relation whatsoever to a full-blown crime but prior to crime being committed (Chan & Chan 2012).

49% of the community responses were not afraid to be alone at home with 21% are afraid to be alone at home leaving another 28% stating neutral to the idea of staying alone in this residential area. Unfortunately the final question shows the sense of security within the community is somewhat limited within the property as 49% of the residents are afraid of possibilities of crime happening within the community. Nevertheless individuals are having high fear of crime when they are left alone. The fear level drops as the community comes to being. Law enforcements' involvement, even as little as the sheer presence does help to bring down the fear of crime. 44.44% of the residents agree with the police officers' presence, as a reduction to fear of crime with 22.22% neutral and 33.33% find it not true.

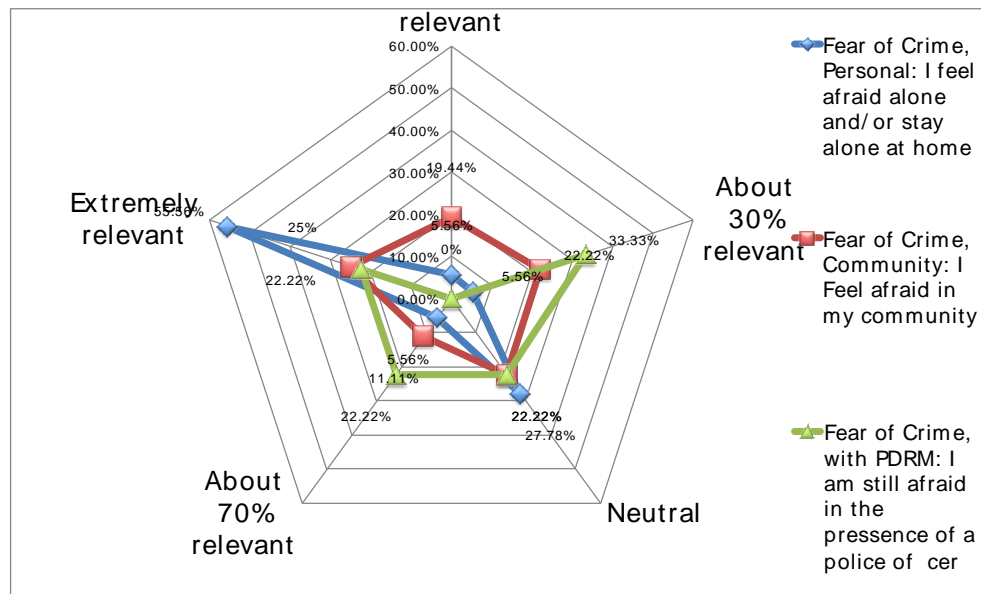


Diagram 1: Security & me: Fear of Crime

#### 4.1.2 Fear of Crime and Information

The trigger point to an emotion related to fear of crime is closely related to information. As the saying goes we are what we eat that is equally relevant to the information we fed on daily (Salman 2011). An inveterate fact is that bad news spread like wild fire and inevitably contributes to fear of crime as supported with data collated in this paper. 72% respondents confirmed of inclination to feeling afraid after receiving crime news. In this time and age, news shared generously across media while print or other forms of public media has taken second stage in dispensing information. Diagram 2 indicates respondents' trust the online media most and social media trailing not far behind. The trend is certainly uprising with mobile broadband access amongst users of 60.4% (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission 2012). Malaysia ranked one of the highest amid its peers in South East Asia (Vadrevu, Shobha 2012).

After continuous weekly engagements program with the focus group on spontaneous environment, it is clear their sentiment on security is related to the company around them. On a few occasions, the inactive neighbors whom we cross path during the weekly program may appear apprehensive due to the very presence of a police officer. This concerned quickly turned into admiration the minute they realized it is the regular crime prevention program organized by the RA with the local police department supported by the police volunteer force a division of JPJJKK.

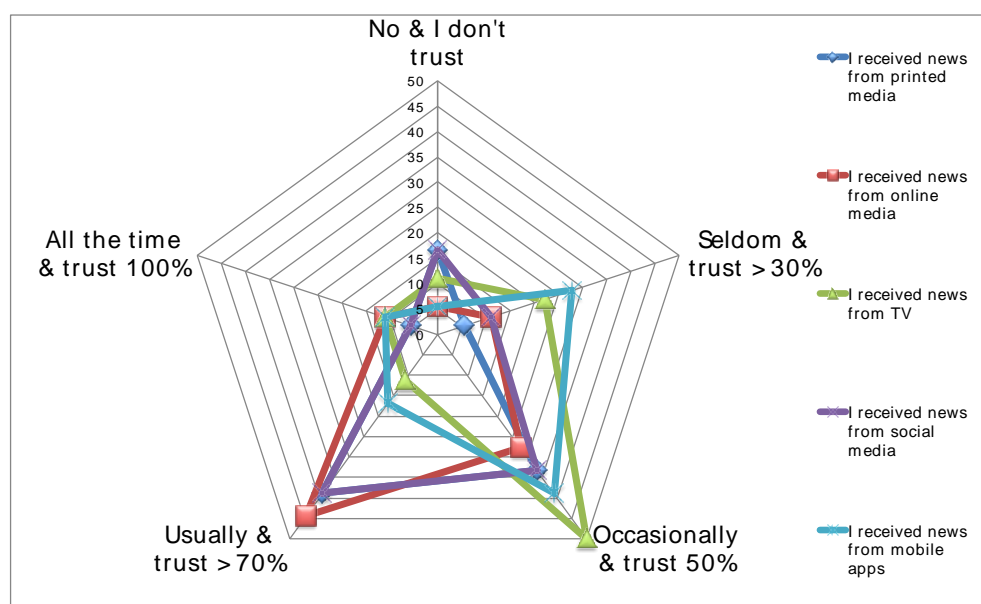


Diagram 2: Security & me: Media resources

From data, the vivid sign has shown how news were gathered and dispensed. The critical area is not just on the mode of media alone but also the level of trust in relation to the news received. Here more than 70% trust the information shared via online and tailing not far behind were the social media at 60%. Regrettably no further information pertaining validity on the origin nor the reliability of news in this paper. Perhaps deeper findings will assist in how media management may reverse the fear of crime phenomenon

#### 4.2 Data Collection: Security and me

Using figure 1 relations between physical activities cum crime prevention, the most important formula is to be inclusive and empowering. For this segment, the statistics demand individual's responsibility as well as their expectations of every stakeholder pertaining their individual's security. The subsequent questionnaires were designed linked to responsibilities to their peripheral security and slowly leading towards the larger community.

##### 4.2.1: Priority in life

Individual's priority in lives has direct link to community development (Yaakob et al. 2010). By understanding their priority, it helps the community to design activities that may sustain a secure environment. Data garnered from the questionnaires explain how urbanized community is looking more inwardly rather than as a larger community. Only 8% ranked community as their priority in comparison with 77% rated individualistic as their preference. Individualistic living lifestyle draws community apart and interpreting security as a quantifiable commodity (Rasidah & Abdullah 2012). In a glance, data collected appear to confirm CPTED as the simplest option in solving security issues however community living is at stake. Yet the priority may change swiftly due to occurrence of crisis such as unexpected trauma within members of the community.

During casual interview session, the residents are all craving for true community living or neighborhood-ness. Here we are able to determine some of the key differences in "BK" community that make it unique. On one occasion, a resident faced with some discomfort pertaining health matters. The RA brought about solution by providing herbal remedies to help reduce the discomfort on the particular resident. All these were shared through the social media group chat established by the RA.

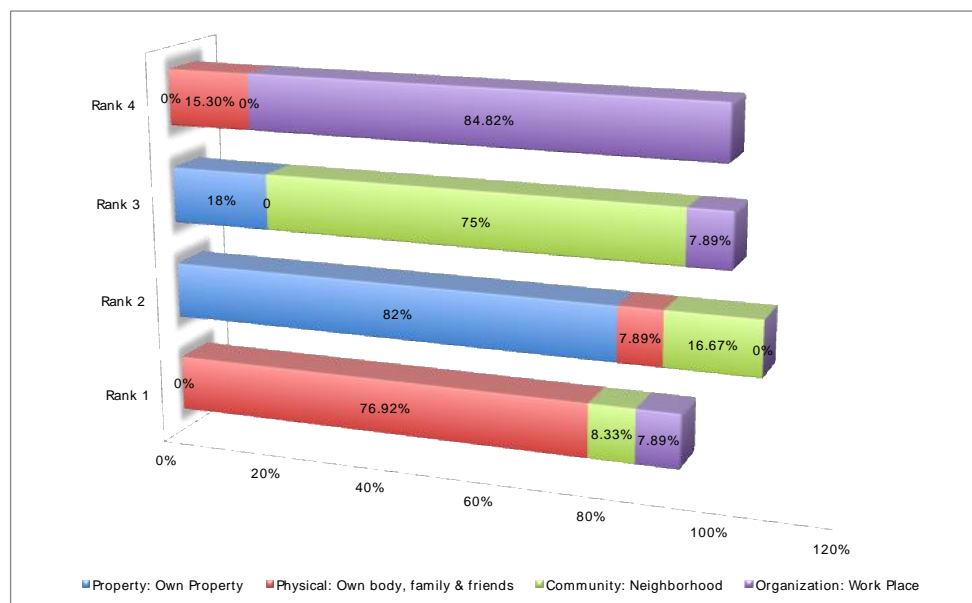


Diagram 2: Priority in life

##### 4.2.2 Who is responsible for your security?

Taking responsibility on personal security, property and well being of our community has been elusive in urban settings (Rasidah et al. 2012). Sustaining a secure environment requires commitment beyond individual and community (Manallyo 2016). Law enforcement officers, government and members of the parliament were referred as passive parties yet play an important role to complete the ecosystem. From data gathered, 71.42% of respondents agree that they are personally responsible for their security and will participate actively on activities related to security. This sub segment also authenticates of the former query in 4.2.1 providing further emphasize on the need of collaborative efforts to combat crime.

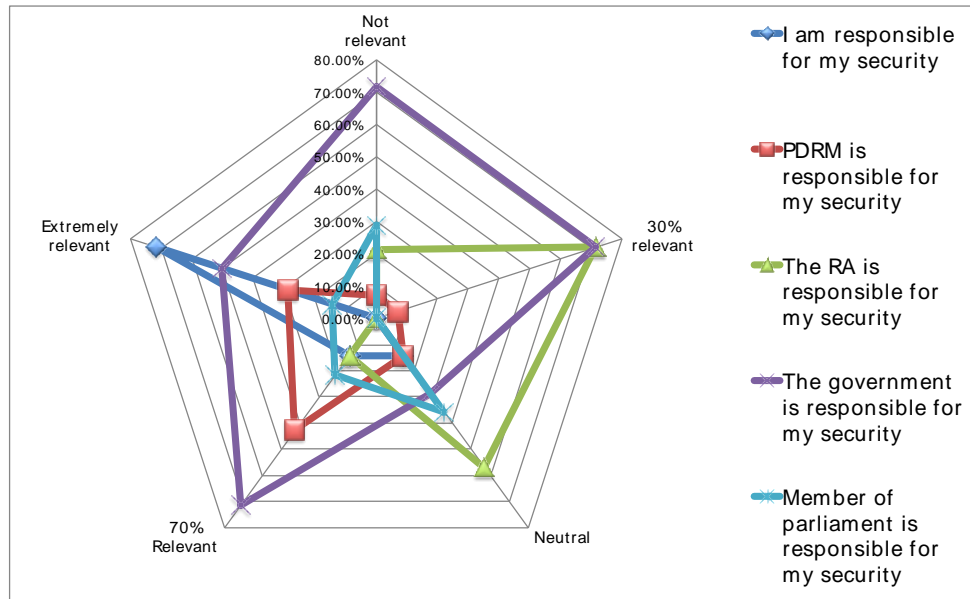


Diagram 3: Security & me: Responsibility

#### 4.2.3 The Effectiveness of PDRM's program in relation to my security needs

Under the same segment, this fragment is to appraise the effectiveness of PDRM's program in addressing grass roots' needs. Some of the highlighted popular programs discussed in this paper are *OPS Payung* (umbrella operations), *OPS Cantum* (graft operations), *OPS Ronda Cegah Jenayah* (crime prevention through patrolling operations) and open dialogue. OPS payung positioned enforcement officers under an umbrella in a specific vicinity for a period of time. OPS cantum is rather unique in this community where police officers were deployed to patrol around the residential area and interact with the community as an effort to prevent crime. OPS Ronda Cegah Jenayah on the other hand has no interaction with community, as the police patrols will breeze through the residential and commercial areas with transportation vehicle. Occasionally open dialogue organized by PDRM as a form of community engagement as well as to garner feedback in crime prevention.

Result sheds some light on the co-relation between the modes of engagement with various groups has direct impact to the efficacy in the lens of corresponding stakeholders. Here we see specific needs were addressed and not necessarily reduction in crime rate but providing assurance that PDRM is actively engaging the community. The data also proves that sheer presence of police force will reduce the immediate act of criminology.

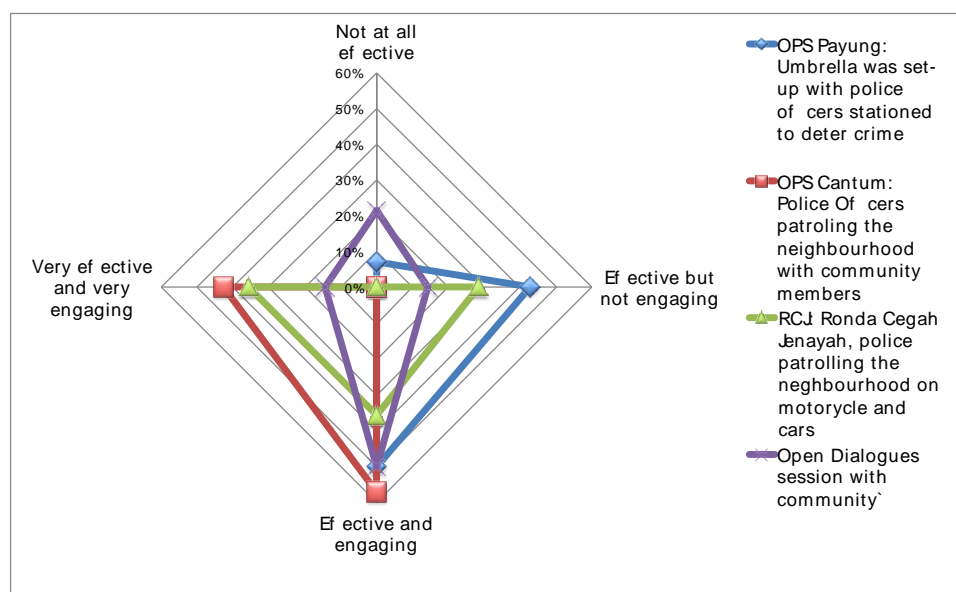


Diagram 4: Security & me: Effectiveness of PDRM program



## 5. Conclusion: Sustainable Security Program

Fundamentally, urbanites view good security as an unachievable goal especially in a sustainable manner. The result from this paper highlights that the battle on fear of crime is not to be tackled in silos, as it requires collaborative efforts. The research concludes security is about personal and community commitment. Effectiveness of the case study was very much grounded upon grass roots' needs being met by the mode of engagement through PDRM. Result from grass root data provides clear indicator for PDRM to streamline their community engagement activities that involve RA with PVR. Not only such implementation was proven effective, as it also helps build trust and bond between residents with PDRM.

The significant limitation for the research was not having enough data collated from a larger pool of respondents. It will be interesting to see how the passive residents deal with these topics in order for future program to capture to be more inclusive. Policy makers may use the research findings to increase better engagement activities for PDRM to tactfully tackle crime effectively with lower resources.

By creating micro level building blocks of committed urban communities, it is a step closer to a larger or macro vantage point for sustainable cities. Perhaps this will be an important addition to any certification related to sustainable cities in the future. Great emphasis on residents' active involvement to combat crime shall be lauded. The next phase of the research is to expound on this paper's results to incorporate technologies in sustaining these initiatives for other communities.

## 6. Acknowledgements

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