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## Research Article

### Re-establishing the Relevance of Philippine Coast Guard Civil Relations Service Basic Training Course Towards its Enhancement

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#### ABSTRACT

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has been involved in civil relations activities to foster community partnerships and support nation-building. Realizing the need to have skilled personnel embodied with fundamental pillars of civil relations, the Civil Relations Service Basic Training Course (CRSBTC) was developed in 2020. This study aims to re-establish the relevance of CRSBTC by assessing its learning outcomes, course content, and work applicability.

Utilizing a Mixed-Method Research Design, this study collected data through surveys and interviews from CRSBTC Graduates, CRSBTC Proponents, Armed Forces of the Philippines Civil Military Operations (AFPCMO) and National Service Training Program -Civic Welfare Training Service (NSTP-CWTS) Instructors Training Course Graduates, District Commanders, Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary (PCGA), CRS personnel with no training and Training Managers.

Results revealed that the CRSBTC is highly effective in equipping graduates with knowledge and skills while highlighting areas for improvement. Further, the CRSBTC is highly relevant to PCG in CRS performance, community engagement and enhancing personnel capabilities.

The challenges in implementing the Course includes underdeveloped and unapproved POI, lack of qualified instructors, COVID-19 pandemic, lack of budgetary support and conducive training facilities, and students taking multiple courses. Meanwhile, the recommendations include updating of POI with CRS-work related topics, adopting CRSBTC as a specialization course, developing a pool of qualified instructors, providing adequate training facilities, integrating technology, and studying the best practices from other uniformed service.

Finally, a Course Instructional Guide for CRSBTC was developed and proposed for adoption and institutionalization to serve as a blueprint for CGCRS training.

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## **Background**

Civil Relations Service or CRS is a unique concept that was born from adopting and modifying the Civil-Military Relations (CMR) concept that emerged in the mid-twentieth century which defines the relationship between military forces to civilian society (Kniskern & Segal, 2015). Bhandari & Sharma (2020) considered this relationship as an intricate one due to misconceptions and confusion about the military's role in society given its authoritative nature.

In the Philippine context, military forces retain their distinct identity as defenders of the country but are ready collaborate with civilians during humanitarian emergencies (Solomon, 2020). These developments have influenced the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) to also adopt a concept that they may use as the third uniformed armed service of the country in their interaction with civilian society. This was further modified to fit PCG's image as a humanitarian agency (Balilo, personal communication, June 4, 2024). Thus, PCG's CRS concept was developed.

According to the Civil Relations Service (CRS) Manual 1st Edition (2021), CRS is PCG's tool to support the government's civil development activities, humanitarian assistance, and disaster response. It involves socio-economic development activities that establish, maintain, and influence relations between the PCG, government agencies, civilian organizations, and the civilian populace.

The development of this concept aligns with the PCG's mandate to render assistance during distress scenarios, develop programs to support youth development, assist in government's effort towards Whole-of-Nation approach by conducting civil and community relations activities with other uniformed service (Joint Peace and Security Coordinating Center, 2021), and partner with Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary (PCGA), other private entities, and government agencies to promote nation-building (Philippines, 2010).

However, this concept was only fully recognized by PCG in 2017 despite engaging in CRS activities for a long time. This was made official through the establishment of a unit called Coast Guard Civil Relations Service (CGCRS) (HPCG, 2017) which serves as an operating arm of PCG in community engagements. CGCRS is anchored under four (4) fundamental pillars known as Civic Action (CIVAC), Civil Relations (CIVREL), Community Relations (COMREL), and Public Information.

CGCRS has been at the forefront in conducting humanitarian assistance during typhoons and disasters, molding youth through the National Service Training Program-Civil Welfare Training Service (NSTP-CWTS) program, promoting sustainable projects in less privileged areas through local community partnerships, delivering truthful information dissemination, and among others leaving lasting impact on the community (CRS Manual, 2021). According to Balilo (personal communication, May 11, 2023), PCG conducts CRS activities to promote the organization, build connections with the community, and draw the government closer to people by showcasing a caring and trustworthy government.

Considering the vast yet significant functions of CGCRS, it is only imperative to train personnel to carry out this role effectively. Unfortunately, there was no existing training that could address this need. Hence, CGCRS leaders were compelled to create a tailor-fit training course to resolve the problem. Thus, Civil Relations Service Basic Training (CRSBTC) was created in 2020. Pangilinan & Cuevas (2018) believed that CRSBTC could be the solution to resolve the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of personnel in conducting CRS operations nationwide.

CRSBTC is a 12-week course convened as one of the specialized courses of the PCG Service Command Career Pattern (SECOMCAP) program aiming to transform the student into specialized personnel embodied by the funda-

mental pillars of CRS (CRSBTC Program of Instruction (POI), 2020). The first class was composed of 21 students from the Coast Guard Officers Course (CGOC) Class 24 and CGOC Class 25 who were trained in-house at the facility of the Coast Guard Education Training Center (CGETC) Annex in Taguig City for three (3) months. After the course, the graduates pioneered the effective implementation of CRS activities in various Coast Guard Units.

Conversely, after the first batch of CRSBTC, no course or other equally similar training was convened. According to Baterbonia (personal communication, February 22, 2023), CRSBTC was urgently conducted without an approved Program of Instruction (POI) to comply with the directives of ADM Joel S Garcia PCG, former PCG Commandant in 2020. CGCRS tried to work on the approval of the POI and forwarded it to the PCG Education and Training Board. Unfortunately, no action was taken because CRSBTC is not a PCG Career Course and does not affect personnel promotion (Cayabyab, 2023).

Additionally, changes in leadership, personnel, and the pandemic contributed to the delay in formalizing CRSBTC as a recognized training course (Llano, personal communication, February 7, 2023). As a result, CGCRS could not convene another CRSBTC class and was left on hiatus until 2024.

With the absence of CRSBTC, CGCRS was forced to send its personnel for cross-training to other training institutes such as the Armed Forces of the Philippines Civil Military Operations (AFPCMO) School to attend Civil-Military Operations (CMO) Course and Coast Guard Education Training Doctrine Command (CGETDC) to attend NSTP-CWTS Instructor's Training Course as intervention (Ingel, personal communication, August 23, 2023). This drastic measure boils down to the realization that training is relevant in capacitating the personnel and increasing productivity in the organization. Majeed (2017) stated that training is a crucial element in an organization's productivity since employees can complete tasks effectively.

The AFPCMO courses aim to educate and train students to become Warrior Diplomats or CMO operatives to win the hearts and minds of people in the military context (Quiocho, personal communication, March 13, 2024) while the NSTP-CWTS Instructors Training Course aims to produce qualified and accredited NSTP instructors who will shape patriotism among students and promote the role of the youth in nation-building (PCG-NSTP Instructors Package Course, 2014).

These courses somehow filled the training gap caused by the discontinuation of CRSBTC. This demonstrates that training is relevant not only to personnel but also to the organization. Ismael et al. (2021), presented that the success of the organization depends on the training and skills of the employees. However, these training interventions failed to transform personnel into PCG CRS specialists as it only focused on a portion of the concept's totality which only a comprehensive and tailor-fit training program like CRSBTC can provide. Karadağ et al. (2015) proved that tailored training programs have a positive effect on the development of student's professional attitudes.

To assess the relevance of CRSBTC, the researcher anchored this study in the New World Kirkpatrick Model (NWKM) by Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2016).

The NWKM has four (4) levels of training evaluation (**Figure 1**):

- **Level 1 Reaction:** measures the degree of participant's satisfaction, engagement, and relevance of training program to their job;
- **Level 2 Learning:** evaluates the increase of knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence, and commitment to apply what they learned;
- **Level 3 Behavior:** which measures training impact, change in behavior, and application of skills learned;
- **Level 4 Results:** assesses the impact of training on organizational success.

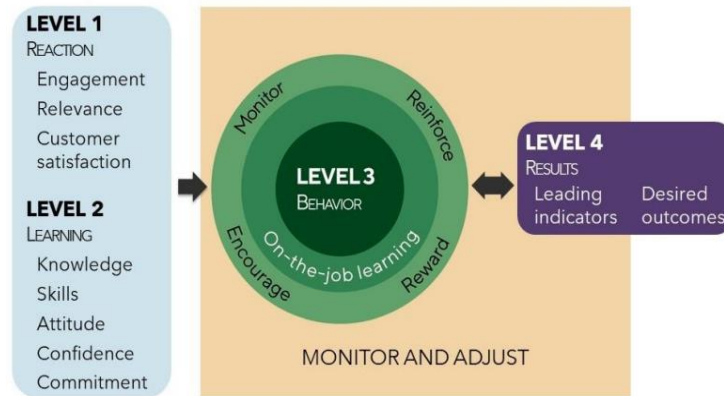


Figure 1. New World Kirkpatrick Model

For this study, the researcher focused on Level 1, 2, and 3 to gauge the student's satisfaction, learnings gained, and significant behavioral change acquired from the CRSBTC.

## Methods

### Research Design

This study employed the use of a mixed-method research design both quantitative research to assess the relevance of CRSBTC and qualitative research to determine what topics to include and challenges met in implementing the training course. The data were simultaneously collected using Concurrent Triangulation

Design and analyze them separately (Walker, 2023).

The variables considered in this study are the following: assessment of CRSBTC in terms of learning outcomes, course content, and work applicability; relevance of CRSBTC, comparison of perspectives on CRSBTC relevance, challenges met in the implementation, and recommendations to enhance CRSBTC.

### Respondents of the Study

This research involves seven (7) sets of respondents, with a total of 572 respondents (Table 1).

Table 1. Breakdown of Survey Respondents with Sampling Method

Respondents	Total Population	Sample Respondents	Sampling Method
CRSBTC Graduates		21	
CRSBTC Proponents		8	
District Commanders		15	
AFPCMO Courses Graduates	68	58	Purposive Sampling
NSTP-CWTS Instructors	51	41	Purposive Sampling
Training Course Graduates			
PCGA	27,836	379	Stratified Random Sampling
CRS Personnel with no training course	134	50	Stratified Purposive Sampling
Total Sample Respondents		572	

The 572 respondents were composed of 21 graduates of CRSBTC Class 01-2020, who experienced the course firsthand, eight (8) CRSBTC proponents who initiated and implemented the course, and District Commanders from 15 Coast Guard Districts who were selected based on their position having a strategic disposition

and outlook over the community engagements in their districts.

Further, PCG personnel who did not take the CRSBTC were also surveyed and were collectively identified as Non-Graduates. Using the Raosoft calculator, 58 respondents were identified out of 68 graduates of the AFPCMO

course while 41 respondents represented the 51 graduates of the NSTP-CWTS Instructors Training Course.

Meanwhile, the researcher surveyed a total of 379 members of the PCGA which is a sample drawn from the total population of 27,836 across all 15 Coast Guard Auxiliary Districts.

First, the total sample size of 379 was determined using the Raosoft calculator. Then, using stratified sampling, the total sample was proportionally distributed across the 15 Districts based on each District's population size (Table 2).

*Table 2. Sample Distribution by Coast Guard Auxiliary District*

Nr.	Auxiliary Districts	Population	%	n
1	CGDNCR-CL	3,652	13.12	50
2	CGADCV	2,226	8.00	30
3	CGADSWM	1,488	5.35	20
4	CGADPAL	1,982	7.12	27
5	CGADSTL	1,952	7.01	27
6	CGADWV	10,617	38.14	144
7	CGADNWLZN	383	1.38	5
8	CGADSEM	1,415	5.08	19
9	CGADBCL	925	3.32	13
10	CGADNM	1,312	4.71	18
11	CGADEV	691	2.48	9
12	CGADNELZN	471	1.69	6
13	CGADSM	335	1.20	5
14	CGADNEM	184	0.66	3
15	CGADBARM	203	0.73	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>27,836</b>		<b>379</b>

Meanwhile, a total of 50 respondents were also identified to represent the 134 CGCRS personnel with no Training Course. To determine the sample respondents, the researcher employed the Raosoft calculator. After which,

using stratified sampling, the total sample was proportionally distributed across CGCRS Headquarters and CRG units based on each population size (**Table 3**).

*Table 3. Sample Distribution for CRS Personnel without Training Course*

	CRS Units	Population	%	N
1	CGCRS HQ	72	54	27
2	CRG WV	10	7	4
3	CRG CV	8	6	3
4	CRG SWM	7	5	3
5	CRG NWLZN	6	4	2
6	CRG NM	6	4	2
7	CRG SEM	6	4	2
8	CRG NCR-CL	5	4	2
9	CRG BCL	4	3	1
10	CRG PAL	4	3	1
11	CRG STL	3	2	1
12	CRG BARM	3	2	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>134</b>		<b>50</b>

On the other hand, the researcher interviewed a total of 12 participants including eight (8) CRSBTC Proponents and four (4) Training

Managers who were currently members of CRSTI and were in charge of implementing training programs within CGCRS (**Table 4**).

*Table 4. Breakdown of Interview Participants*

Interview Participants	Total
<b>CRSBTC Proponents</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Training Managers</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>

## Results and Discussion

### *Profile of the Respondents*

The demographic profile of the respondents revealed a variety of ranks and unit assignments: CRSBTC graduates were composed of primarily junior officers holding staff duties and other operational assignments in various PCG Districts, Non-Graduates of CRSBTC, who are graduates of AFPCMO courses, NSTP-CWTS Instructors Training Course, and CRS personnel without formal training, were mostly junior officers and non-officers assigned to the National Headquarters Philippine Coast Guard, other Command Units, and CGCRS. On the other hand, staff officers dominate the CRSBTC Proponents while Flag Rank officers with the rank of Commodore compose the District Commanders profile. Lastly, PCGA is predominantly composed of staff members assigned to various Auxiliary Districts, and the interviewees from Training Managers were junior officers and non-officers assigned to CRSTI.

Regardless of the difference in rank, unit assignment, and training exposures, it was revealed that all the respondents have initiated or participated in various CRS activities, particularly in medical and dental missions, humanitarian efforts and disaster responses, PCGA operations, blood donations, relief operations, inter-agency collaboration, and maritime awareness initiatives. Meanwhile, the interviewed participants include the CRSBTC Proponents and Training Managers.

### *The Civil Relations Service Basic Training Course (CRSBTC) as Assessed by its Graduates*

This section discusses the Civil Relations Service Basic Training Course (CRSBTC) based on graduates' assessment, focusing on its

learning outcomes, course content, and work applicability. To facilitate a better understanding of the comparing data, the researcher has bolded the highest scores across the cohorts and highlighted with color red the lowest scores.

### *Learning Outcomes*

The assessment of CRSBTC in terms of learning outcomes reveals a strong positive perception of its effectiveness. Based on Table 5, the overall weighted mean (WM) score for the course's learning outcomes is 3.66, interpreted as "Strongly Agree" (SA). This high rating suggests that graduates generally recognize the CRSBTC as valuable in providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfill their roles in the CGCRS.

The highest-rated learning outcomes (WM = 3.81, SA) include deepening graduates' understanding of CGCRS functions within the PCG organization and equipping them with knowledge for effective engagement in Civil Affairs initiatives. These scores imply that graduates felt the course was particularly successful in fostering a strong foundational understanding of CGCRS roles and enhancing their capability to participate in civil affairs—key areas crucial to the effectiveness of PCG's engagement with various communities.

The lowest-rated indicator pertains to the skills in video production for promoting various PCG activities which received a WM of 3.33, with a verbal interpretation of "Agree" (A).

This lower rating suggests that while the course offered some value in video production skills, graduates may have found the training in this area less comprehensive or impactful compared to other learning outcomes. The

result might indicate a potential area for improvement in CRSBTC, as video production is an increasingly vital skill for public affairs and promoting organizational activities.

Table 5. Assessment of CRSBTC in terms of Learning Outcomes

INDICATORS	WM	VI
1. The CRSBTC learning outcomes deepened my understanding of the functions of CGCRS to PCG Organization.	<b>3.81</b>	<b>SA</b>
2. It equipped me with the necessary knowledge required to effectively engage in Civil Affairs initiatives.	<b>3.81</b>	<b>SA</b>
3. It helped me acquire the necessary skills to effectively collaborate with community stakeholders (e.g. NGAs, LGU, NGOs).	3.71	SA
4. It helped me acquire knowledge to effectively carry out the tasks of a Public Affairs practitioner.	3.71	SA
5. It prepared me to contribute effectively to the Philippine Coast Guard's efforts in community development.	3.71	SA
6. It enhanced my problem-solving abilities in crafting propaganda for the branding of PCG.	3.67	SA
7. It developed my skills in press release writing to assist the PCG in providing factual information to the public.	3.62	SA
8. It helped me gain an understanding of the different general process exercises being conducted under CRS operations.	3.62	SA
9. It equipped me with the basic photography skills to produce optimum results.	3.57	SA
10. It helped me gain skills in video production that will promote the various PCG activities.	<b>3.33</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>SA</b>

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 — Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 — Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 — Disagree (D); 1.00 – 1.49 — Strongly Disagree (SD); WM – Weighted Mean; VI – Verbal Interpretation

### Course Content

Findings reveal that graduates find the course content moderately relevant and beneficial to their preparation as CRS personnel with an overall WM of 3.50, with a verbal interpretation of "Agree" (A), indicating that while the course content meets expectations to a considerable extent, there are areas that could benefit from further enhancement to fully support the objectives of the training program (Table 6).

The highest-rated items were Indicators 1 and 2 each with a WM of 3.71, interpreted as "Strongly Agree" (SA) underscoring that graduates view the content as aligned with the fundamental objectives of the CRSBTC, particularly in equipping them with the essential knowledge to engage effectively within communities— a critical function of the CRS.

Meanwhile, the lowest mean score were Indicators 9 and 10 each with WM of 3.19, interpreted as "Agree" (A) suggesting that the course organization and engagement level of topics were less optimal. Thus, implies the need to improve the course structure and delivery methods to enhance clarity, systematic organization, and engagement.

Notably, graduates also generally agreed that course content was presented in a clear and understandable manner (WM=3.48), encourages active participation in class (WM=3.48), and effective assessment methods to measure understanding of CGCRS functions (WM=3.38), all interpreted as "Agree" (A), which denotes a positive perception though improvements were still recommended.

Table 6. Assessment of CRSBTC in terms of Course Content

INDICATORS	WM	VI
1. The course contents are relevant to the objectives of the CRSBTC in empowering students to become effective civil relations personnel ready to serve the community.	3.71	SA
2. It provided me with knowledge that I may use in fulfilling my role in community engagements.	3.71	SA
3. The topics covered by this training helped me gain skills that I may use in performing CRS-related functions.	3.67	SA
4. Overall, the course content has had a positive impact on my future job as CRS personnel.	3.62	SA
5. It provided me with comprehensive understandings on the topics included.	3.57	SA
6. The course contents are clear and understandable.	3.48	A
7. The learning activities embedded in CRSBTC POI encouraged me to actively participate in class.	3.43	A
8. The assessment methods effectively measured my understanding of CGCRS functions.	3.38	A
9. The CRSBTC Modules were organized in a systematic manner.	3.19	A
10. The topics under each module kept my interest engaged throughout the training.	3.19	A
<b>OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>A</b>

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 — Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 — Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 — Disagree (D); 1.00 – 1.49 — Strongly Disagree (SD); WM – Weighted Mean; VI – Verbal Interpretation

### Work Applicability

The findings highlight CRSBTC's significant impact on the professional readiness of graduates, indicating that the course equips them with skills and confidence applicable in real-world settings. **Table 7** showed the overall WM is 3.62, with a verbal interpretation of "Strongly Agree" (SA), suggesting that graduates generally find the training beneficial and relevant to their responsibilities as CRS personnel within the PCG.

The highest-rated indicator, with a WM of 3.81 and interpreted as "Strongly Agree" (SA), is Indicator 1 which emphasizes that the CRSBTC effectively enhances graduates' interpersonal skills, a key aspect of their role as CRS personnel, where building strong relationships with community stakeholders, such as local government units and other agencies, is crucial. This outcome indicates that the course's emphasis on communication skills has a direct and positive impact on graduates' capacity to foster community connections, which is essential for successful civil relations work. In contrast, the lowest-rated indicator (WM = 3.38, A) refers to the relevance of CRSBTC to work and

designation, suggesting that while graduates recognize the course's relevance, some find its applicability less applicable to specific job roles. This could indicate that the course may benefit from adjustments to ensure even closer alignment with the day-to-day responsibilities and unique requirements of various PCG designations.

Other notable findings include graduates' positive perceptions regarding the impact of the course on their career growth and skill development, as indicated by scores of 3.71 across several indicators, including satisfaction with learning, belief in the course's effectiveness in producing skilled CRS personnel, and the successful application of learned skills in their daily work. These consistently high scores reinforce the value of the CRSBTC in fostering career-relevant competencies.

In contrast, it was also striking that graduates have a little lower perception of the course's potential to develop and enhance their competitiveness and effectiveness as a CRS officer, as indicated by a score of 3.48 "Agree". This could mean that adjustments can be made



to ensure that the target competitiveness and effectiveness are met. Despite the contrasting results, the results still show that the course has been beneficial to the graduates' work.

Table 7. Assessment of CRSBTC in terms of Work Applicability

INDICATORS	WM	VI
1. My ability to interact with community stakeholders has improved significantly.	<b>3.81</b>	<b>SA</b>
2. I am satisfied with the learning I have gained from this course as it has significantly impacted my career growth.	3.71	SA
3. I firmly believe that the CRSBTC has produced skilled CRS personnel specialized to carry out CRS functions to benefit PCG partners and stakeholders.	3.71	SA
4. Overall, I have successfully applied all the learnings acquired from CRSBTC in my day-to-day work.	3.71	SA
5. The course has instilled confidence in me as I perform my work as a PCG Officer.	3.67	SA
6. The course has empowered me to implement CRS-related activities.	3.62	SA
7. The course broadened my perspective as I applied strategic communications in my field of work.	3.62	SA
8. The CRSBTC has developed me into an effective Civil Relations Officer.	3.48	A
9. It significantly enhanced my competitiveness in my job as CRS practitioner.	3.48	A
10. CRSBTC is relevant to my current work and designation.	<b>3.38</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>OVERALL WEIGHTED MEAN</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>SA</b>

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 — Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 — Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 — Disagree (D); 1.00 – 1.49 — Strongly Disagree (SD); WM – Weighted Mean; VI – Verbal Interpretation

### Relevance of CRSTBC to PCG

This section examines the relevance of the Civil Relations Service Basic Training Course (CRSBTC) to the Philippine Coast Guard, as perceived by the survey respondents.

### Graduates and Non-Graduates of CRSBTC

Findings highlight a strong consensus among Graduates and Non-Graduates of CRSBTC on the relevance of the course for CRS personnel (**Figure 2**).

Graduates rated Indicators 1, 3, 4, and 14 highly, each with an overall WM of 3.86 highlighting the CRSBTC's critical role in preparing personnel for community-oriented and specialized roles.

Non-graduates also rated certain indicators highly, reflecting a consensus across groups. AFPCMO respondents, like the graduates, rated Indicator 1 (WM=3.81) as the most significant, confirming the shared view of CRS activities' importance for community development. While, NSTP-CWTS Instructors Training Course participants identified Indicator 4" (WM = 3.88) as their highest, in alignment with

graduates' views. Similarly, those without any formal training also rated Indicator 1 (WM = 3.74) as the highest, acknowledging the value of community-oriented CRS activities.

In terms of the lowest-rated indicators, CRSBTC graduates rated Indicator 7 and Indicator 12, each with an overall WM of 3.62, as the least relevant, though both still received a "Strongly Agree" interpretation. This finding indicates the need to revisit and enhance the CRSBTC program.

On the contrary, non-graduates have a different perspective. AFPCMO respondents rated Indicator 10 (WM =3.66) and Indicator 3 (WM = 3.59) which CRSBTC graduates rated among the highest. NSTP-CWTS Instructors Training Course participants also rated Indicator 7 (WM=3.59) as their lowest, mirroring the CRSBTC graduate's assessment. Lastly, those with no training experience found Indicators 3 and 14, each with an overall WM of 3.50 to be least relevant in contrast to the high ratings by graduates, possibly indicating differing perspectives based on training exposure.

Overall, non-graduates from the NSTP-CWTS Instructors Training Course reported the highest perceived relevance of CRSBTC (WM = 3.79) to be followed by CRSBTC Graduates (WM = 3.75). In contrast, those without training had the lowest overall rating (WM = 3.61) suggesting a more varied perspective.

In terms of Standard Deviations (SD), the respondent's WMs are concentrated around the overall WM. This suggests that majority of the respondents generally agree or strongly agree on the relevance of the course.

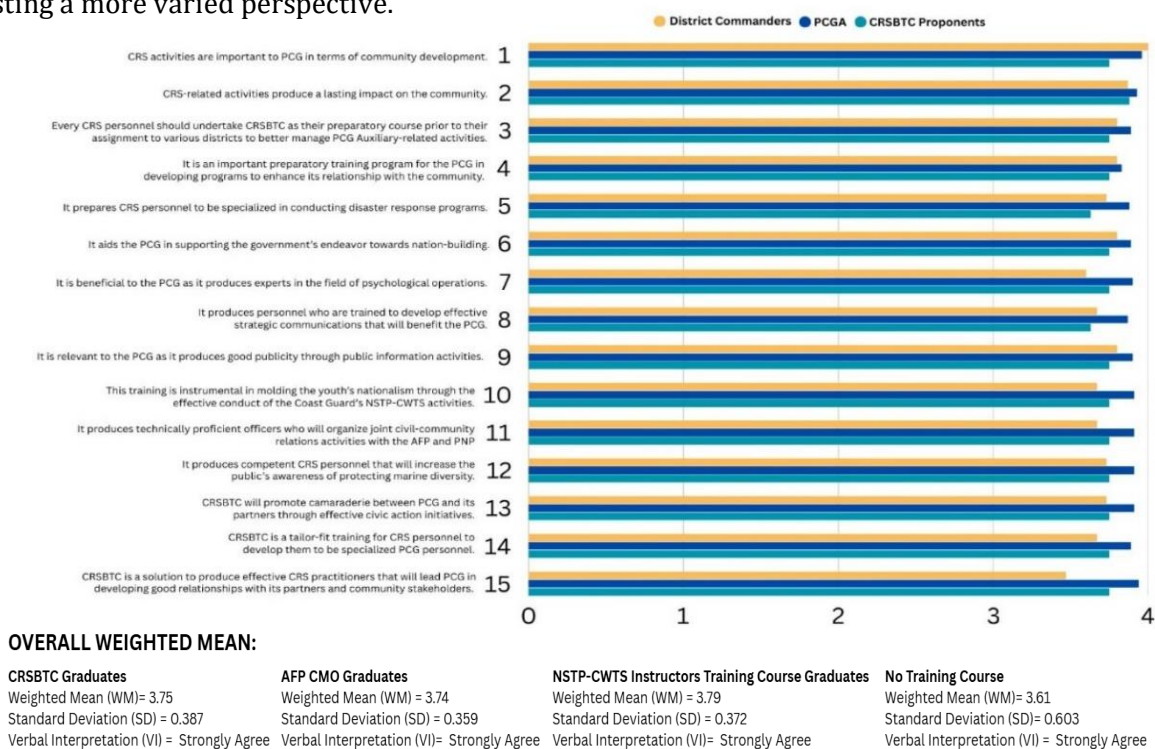


Figure 2. Relevance of CRSBTC to the PCG as Perceived by Graduates and Non- Graduates

### Others (District Commanders, PCGA, and CRSBTC Proponents)

The perceptions of the relevance of the CRSBTC across District Commanders, PCGA, and CRSBTC proponents reveal shared insights, along with distinct assessments in specific areas (Figure 3).

The finding reveals that District Commanders and PCGA members rated Indicator 1 as the most relevant, with mean scores of 4.00 and 3.96, respectively. Meanwhile, CRSBTC Proponents identified Indicator 2 as the most significant, with a mean score of 3.88. This alignment on community impact underscores a shared acknowledgment of the value of CRS activities in fostering long-term community relationships.

Conversely, the lowest rated indicators varied across cohorts. District Commanders assigned the lowest rating to Indicator 15 (WM=3.47) while PCGA respondents identified

Indicator 4 (WM=3.83), and CRSBTC proponents rated Indicators 5 and 8 (WM=3.63) as their lowest. Notably, there is a consistent emphasis on the relevance of CRSBTC in supporting community impact, as evidenced by the high scores given to Indicators 1 and 2 across all cohorts. Despite these shared views, variations in the lowest-rated indicators suggest differing priorities among the groups regarding the specific areas where CRSBTC contributes to the PCG's operations and community engagement.

In terms of SD, the respondent's WMs are also concentrated around the overall WM which suggests that majority of the respondents generally agree or strongly agree on the relevance of CRSBTC.

In comparing the responses between CRSBTC Graduates and these other groups, notable similarities and differences emerge. For

Indicator 1, CRSBTC Graduates, District Commanders, and PCGA members all rate this highly, indicating a unified recognition of CRS's vital role in community engagement within the PCG. However, distinctions become apparent in the emphasis on other indicators.

Unlike CRSBTC proponents, CRSBTC graduates did not highlight Indicator 2, as the most relevant. Instead, their responses were distributed more evenly across other indicators. The graduates, therefore, present a slightly broader view of CRSBTC's relevance beyond solely community impact, suggesting that while community development is fundamental, other aspects may hold equal relevance in their perspective.

For Indicator 15, CRSBTC graduates strongly agree with a high mean, showing confidence in CRSBTC's potential to foster effective community relations and external partnerships

while the District Commanders' rating reflects only an "Agree" level, with a lower mean score of 3.47, hinting that active Coast Guard leaders see room for improvement in the course's practical impact on external relations.

CRSBTC graduates also rated Indicator 4 the highest reflecting their strong perception of its value as a preparatory course for relationship-building initiatives while the PCGA rated this as their lowest suggesting that PCGA members view other aspects of CRSBTC's relevance as more significant, such as its direct impact on community-building and response initiatives.

Lastly, CRSBTC proponents rated Indicators 5 and 8 as their lowest while CRSBTC Graduates did not emphasize these indicators as low priorities, reflecting a possible difference in perspective on the importance of these specialized skills within the course curriculum.



Figure 3. Relevance of CRSBTC to the PCG as Perceived by District Commanders, PCGA, and Its Proponents

### Significant Difference in the Perception of the Graduates and Non-Graduates of CRSBTC on its Relevance to the PCG

The independent samples t-test results, presented in Table 8, assess whether there are

significant differences in the perceptions of Graduates and Non-Graduates regarding the relevance of the CRSBTC to the PCG.

Table 8 Significant Difference in the Perception of the Respondents on the Relevance of CRSBTC to the PCG

Independent Samples T-Test			Graduates		
Non-Graduates	Mean Difference	df	T	p	Interpretation
AFPCMO	0.01	77	0.138	0.891	<i>Not Significant</i>
NSTP-CWTS Instructors Training Course	-0.04	60	-0.368	0.714	<i>Not Significant</i>
No Training Course Received	0.14	69	1.010	0.318	<i>Not Significant</i>

The findings indicate that the perceived relevance of CRSBTC is largely consistent across all cohorts. Specifically, the comparison between Graduates and AFPCMO yielded a t-value of 0.138 with a p-value of 0.891, indicating no significant difference.

Similarly, the comparison with the NSTP-CWTS Instructors Training Course resulted in a t-value of -0.368 and a p-value of 0.714, also confirming a lack of significance. Lastly, the comparison with individuals who received no training course showed a t-value of 1.010 and a p-value of 0.318, further reinforcing the absence of a significant difference.

The p-values for all comparisons exceed the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, suggesting that any observed differences in mean perceptions between the Graduates and Non-Graduates are statistically insignificant. This indicates that CRSBTC, AFPCMO, and NSTP-CWTS Instructors Training Course Graduates has similar understanding on the relevance of CRSBTC to the PCG.

Overall, these results highlight the agreement among respondents, suggesting that both Graduates and Non-Graduates recognize the importance of the training course in enhancing the capabilities of the Coast Guard, regardless of their training status.

### ***Challenges Met by the CRSBTC Proponents and Training Managers in the Implementation of CRSBTC***

CRSBTC Proponents and Training Managers were able to identify the challenges in the implementation of CRSBTC.

### ***Underdeveloped and Unapproved Program of Instruction (POI)***

Both groups agreed that underdeveloped and unapproved POI posed a major challenge. Proponent 1 mentioned that CRSBTC POI was

not tested before implementation resulting in gaps that failed to align with PCG's function leading to limited appreciation for CRS activities. Training Managers 1 and 2 also shared that they cannot continue the course at this time because there was no approved POI as a result, most CRS personnel lack the knowledge and skills to effectively carry out CRS activities.

Training Manager 4 added that without an approved POI, CGCRS cannot justify the need for budgetary support, adequate training facilities, and learning materials that could support CRSTI. Proponent 5 explained that they tried to work on the approval of the POI even during the implementation and after the conduct of the course, however, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the delay because CGCRS was focused on conducting humanitarian efforts.

The discontinuation of CRSBTC brought by underdeveloped and unapproved POI has left a big training gap in CRS personnel's education. Further, it also caused a ripple effect affecting the whole CGCRS.

### ***Lack of Qualified Instructors and SMEs***

Proponents 5,6,7,8 also agreed that the lack of qualified instructors or SMEs and being a first-time training staff is a challenge. Proponent 5 shared that the implementation of CRSBTC was rapidly executed, and they were put into a tight spot as first-time training staff with limited experience. Though they were designated as training staff, they are not yet specialized in CRS, Proponent 5 added. Meanwhile, Proponents 4 and 7 declared that despite their educational background, they have not attended any training course that would qualify them to be a Coast Guard training staff.

At present, Training Manager 1 cited that CRSTI struggles to continue the implementation of CRSBTC because they only have four (4) personnel with only one (1) personnel with an

educational background. All Training Managers mentioned that they are newly assigned personnel of CGCRS with less than two (2) years of working experience and have not yet received any relevant training.

### ***COVID-19 Pandemic***

Another challenge that the proponents identified was the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Proponents 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8, the COVID-19 pandemic hindered the full implementation of CRSBTC in 2020 since it limited the learning activities. Proponent 7 mentioned that CRS activities are about reaching out to the community and being with people. Unfortunately, students did not experience immersion in the community because of the observance of health protocols, Proponent 8 added. Proponent 5 also shared that it was extremely difficult to implement the course without compromising the quality of training and the health of the trainees and training staff.

### ***Lack of Budgetary Support***

Proponents 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8 also identified the lack of budgetary support as a challenge both in the implementation of CRSBTC then and the continuation of the course now. Proponent 1 shared that budgetary concerns are a common problem in the PCG. It has been a stumbling block during the implementation of the course, and it remains so in the pursuit of continuity, Proponent 1 added.

On the other hand, Training Manager 1 also confirmed that the lack of budgetary support hinders its continuation while Training Manager 4 mentioned that this is only collateral damage to the unapproved POI. No approved POI means no budgetary support, Training Manager 4 added. In addition, Proponent 8 also shared that this challenge demotivated them since they had to sacrifice their own money to support the course.

### ***Lack of Conducive Training Facilities***

All Proponents agreed that the lack of conducive training facilities was also a challenge. Proponent 6 strongly expressed that lack of facility is the number 1 problem of PCG, in general. Proponents 2, 4, 7, and 8 specified that barracks were converted to classrooms to

accommodate the students because they were sharing training facilities with other training institutions in PCG. As a result of this inconvenience, training staff had a hard time facilitating learning and students were inattentive during classroom instructions, Proponent 7 added.

In addition, Training Managers 1 and 3 also shared that even up to this date, CRSTI does not have a physical training school or classroom to accommodate students, which added to their struggle to continue the course. Due to these facts, Proponent 2 urges careful planning, administrative support, and resource allocation as a solution to this challenge.

### ***Students taking Multiple Courses***

Proponent 3 also mentioned that taking multiple courses was a challenge not only to CRSBTC students but also to training staff. According to Proponent 4, CRSBTC students had a hard time giving their full attention to CRSBTC because they also had to catch up with the remaining subjects in their CGOC classes. Proponent 8 also revealed that they must adjust some activities in CRSBTC because the students are struggling to juggle the two basic courses. CRSBTC Graduate 5 even testified that they were challenged to simultaneously keep up with their CGOC classes while taking CRSBTC. Both CRSBTC Graduate 5 and 18 commented on offering the course to personnel who are not currently undertaking other courses for them to solely focus on CRSTBC.

Notably, other challenges cited by the Proponents were hot weather conditions which cause discomfort for trainees, and difficulty in procuring and maintaining adequate training equipment and module materials due to financial constraints. All the challenges presented may show that the PCG, CGCRS, and its CRSTI were not ready to implement the course.

### ***Proposed Revisions to be Incorporated to Enhance CRSBTC as Suggested by the Respondents and Participants***

The revisions to be incorporated to enhance the CRSBTC were based on the assessment and recommendations of the respondents specifically the CRSBTC Graduates and participants (**Figure 4**).



Accordingly, Effective Community/ Public, LGU, and stakeholder engagement were regarded as the topmost suggested topics to be included in the enhanced CRSBTC POI as it can equip CRS personnel with knowledge and skills to effectively connect with the community. It was followed by On-the-Job Training (OJT) or

Immersion in Media Relations and District as it can supplement theoretical learning gained with actual field experience. The third highest suggestion was Psychological Operations (Psy-Ops) and EO 70 or NTF ELCAC as it can provide a better understanding of CRS proles in these operations.

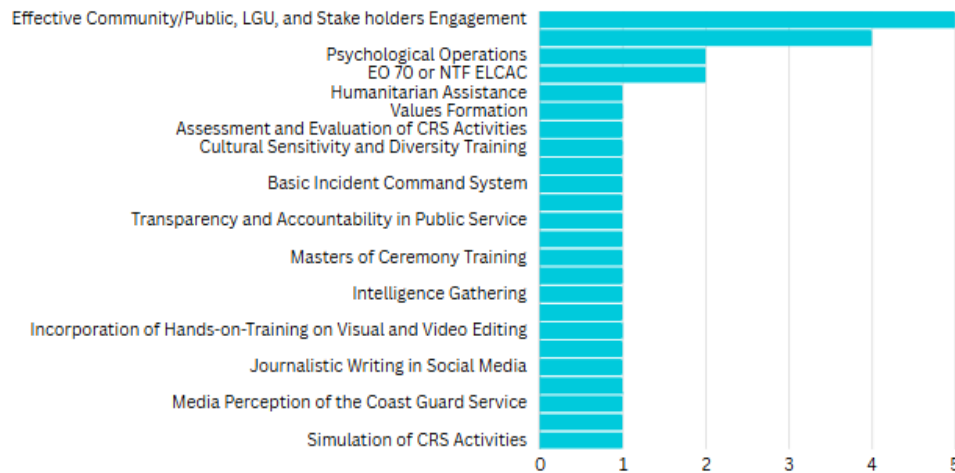


Figure 4. Suggested Topics of CRSBTC Graduates to be included in the CRSBTC POI

Some respondents also recommended the inclusion of simulation of CRS activities, the incorporation of hands-on-training on visual and video editing, and values formation.

Other topics that emerged in this study were Humanitarian assistance, assessment and evaluation of CRS Activities, Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity Training, Ethics and Professionalism, Basic Incident Command System, Stress Management and Well-being, Transparency and Accountability in Public Service, Mental Health Awareness, Masters of Ceremony Training, Difference of CGCRS, CGPAS, and CG-7, Intelligence Gathering, Human Behavior, Civilian Control of Man-in-Uniform, Journalistic Writing in Social Media, Strategic Communication, Media Perception of the Coast Guard Service, Civil-Military Approaches to Election Security, NSTP-CWTS and PCGA Affairs.

Other recommendations were also revealed such as integration of diverse multi-media elements, implementation of collaborative activities, designing unconventional assessments, incorporation of adaptive learning, creation of interactive workshops that will develop practical skills, technology integrations, and continuous feedback mechanisms.

Notably, the following recommendations also appeared in this study such as studying the best practices of other uniformed services or foreign counterparts in conducting civil relations training, developing a pool of qualified instructors, and enhancing training facilities.

Overall, this study revealed that the creation of a Civil Relation Service Basic Training Course Instructional Guide incorporating all suggested topics emerges as the top recommended revision to enhance the CRSBTC program.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings, several key conclusions were attained:

1. The respondents and interviewees of the study were primarily junior officers and non-officers currently assigned to CGCRS and other PCG units and have initiated or participated in various CRS activities. It only reflects that junior officers and non-officers plays an important role in community engagements. Further, respondents and interviewees were exposed to various training programs- some took CRSBTC, others took AFP CMO courses and NSTP-CWTS

Instructors Training Course, while others had none, but continued to actively initiate or participate in CRS functions. The diversity of training exposures shows a varying and contrasting perspectives which can lead to inconsistencies in the level of preparedness and effectiveness in performing CRS roles. This further highlights the need for tailor-fit training program that will serve as a common ground to enhance CRS personnel effectiveness in performing CRS functions.

2. The assessment of CRSBTC indicates that the course is highly effective in equipping graduates with essential knowledge and skills to prepare them to fulfill their roles in civil relations and the community. The findings, however, show areas of improvement such as improving production skills to promote PCG activities, refining the course's structure and delivery method for better engagement, and aligning the course with specific job roles. This only means that while CRSBTC is deemed valuable, it still requires updating and developing instructional guide to make the course more relevant, applicable, and impactful to the students and organization.
3. This study also confirmed the relevance of CRSBTC to PCG in terms of developing personnel performance and community engagement. Despite the varying perspective, the respondents and interviewee's active participation in CRS activities and unified acknowledgement that training could be a tool to further enhance their skills in this field, still testifies the course's benefit and relevance while pointing out areas for enhancement. Thus, reinforces the necessity to enhance the Course making it more valuable to PCG.
4. This study uncovered the challenges that hindered the implementation of the course. The greatest challenge was the underdeveloped and unapproved POI which left a big training gap in CGCRS and has led to a lack of budgetary support, adequate training facilities, and learning materials. The respondents also identified the following challenges – lack of qualified instructors or SMEs, the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of

budgetary support and conducive training facilities, and students taking multiple courses. These interconnected challenges only indicate a call to urgent action for curriculum development, increase budgetary supports, and institutional supports. By addressing these issues, it will make CRSBTC more relevant and sustainable thereby producing competent PCG CRS specialists.

Overall, this study uncovered valuable insights into the assessment and relevance of CRSBTC, challenges, revisions, and recommendations to enhance the CRSBTC POI. By implementing the recommendations, CGCRS can acquire comprehensive training material that will lay down the foundation and standardize the delivery of CRS Education to develop specialized PCG personnel who can exercise CRS activities in support of the organization's mandate.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. **Adopt and institutionalize the Civil Relations Service Basic Training Course Instructional Guide.** With the existing training gap brought about by the hiatus of the CRSBTC program in 2020, it is high time to adopt and institutionalize a comprehensive training course instructional guide that will serve as a foundation for delivering a standardized training program fit for CGCRS. The relevance of CRSBTC to PCG and its personnel was proved in this study hence the adoption and institutionalization of the CRSBTC Instructional Guide will pave the way to further enhancing the knowledge and skill of personnel in developing optimum CRS service to the community. Further, it will also be instrumental in justifying the need for the organization to provide logistical and training support to CGCRS.
2. **Adopt and Implement the Civil Relations Service Basic Training Course as a Specialization Course for the Non-Officers of Coast Guard Civil Relations Service.** This study uncovered that the majority of the CGCRS personnel are non-officers who are assigned to PCG districts and units performing CRS-related functions without

proper education and training. Thus, it is recommended to adopt and implement the CRSBTC as a Specialization Course for CGCRS Non-Officers given that the duration of this course has qualified the requirements for it to become a Specialization Course. Further, this course was developed in a comprehensive manner focusing on providing in-depth learning for highly specialized fields like CRS. Henceforth, implementing CRSBTC as a Specialization Course will not only produce skilled CGCRS personnel but also experts in civil relations and community engagements.

3. **Developing a pool of qualified instructors, guest lecturers, and SMEs.** This study revealed the negative impact of the lack of qualified instructors and SMEs in education. By acknowledging this detrimental effect, it is then recommended to invest in the professional development of instructors to develop a pool of experts.
4. **Provide adequate training facilities.** Adequate training facilities contribute to the success of learning among students as proven in this study. It is therefore important to prioritize investing in conducive training facilities that will serve as an avenue to motivate students to learn.

5. **Future Research.** With the emerging challenges and technological advancements in the realm of civil relations, it is high time to explore the possibilities of maximizing equitable access to technology and evaluate teachers' preparedness to integrate this into their delivery. Delving into this potential will help optimize civil relations activities by reaching more communities and establishing more collaboration with agencies and stakeholders. Further, it is also recommended to study the best practices of other uniformed services or foreign counterparts in conducting civil relations training. The concept of CRS in uniformed services such as AFPCMO was briefly discussed in this study, however, extensive data mining to AFPCMO, and other local and foreign counterparts is still recommended to acquire a deeper understanding of their system. By doing so, it can open doors for innovation and continuous improvement which are beneficial in attaining excellence and competence in PCG's CRS education and operation.

Figure 5 presents the short-term and long-term implementation plan for each recommendation.

Recommendation	Priority	Short Term Goal	Long Term Goal	Responsible Party
1. Adopt and institutionalize the Civil Relations Service Basic Training Course Instructional Guide.	High	- Review, Finalize, and Approved Course Instructional Guide - Pilot Implementation	- Full institutionalization of CRSBTC Course Instructional Guide - Integration to PCG and CGCRS Education and Training System	- CGCRS leadership - CRS Training Institute - DCS for Education and Training, CG-12 / Coast Guard Education Training Doctrine Command (CGETDC)
2. Adopt and Implement the Civil Relations Service Basic Training Course as a Specialization Course for the Non-Officers of Coast Guard Civil Relations Service.	High	- Develop course materials and guidelines - Conduct orientation and initial training sessions	- Full Institutionalization of CRSBTC as a Specialization Course - Establish monitoring and evaluation system to assess training effectiveness	- CGCRS leadership - CRS Training Institute - DCS for Education and Training, CG-12 / Coast Guard Education Training Doctrine Command (CGETDC)
3. Developing a pool of qualified instructors, guest lecturers, and SMEs.	Medium	- Identify and train initial instructors	- Continuous professional development - Hire SMEs	- CGCRS leadership - CRS Training Institute - DCS for Human Resource Management, CG-1 / Coast Guard Human Resource Management Command
4. Provide adequate training facilities.	Medium	- Identify current training facility requirements - Allocate budget	- Acquire and build an adequate and conducive training facility	- CGCRS leadership - CRS Training Institute - DCS for Comptrollership, CG-6 - Coast Guard Infrastructure and Development Service
5. Future Research (Integration of Technology and Studying Best Practices of Other Uniformed Service and Foreign Counterparts)	Low	- Identifying available technological devices, gaps, and evaluating teacher's preparedness in technology integration - Initiate coordination with other local and international CRS counterparts to study their best practices	- Full integration of technology in CRS education - Establish long-term partnership with CRS counterparts	- CGCRS leadership - CRS Training Institute - DCS for Weapons, Communications, Electronics and Information System, CG-11 / Coast Guard Weapons, Communications, Electronics, and Information System Command

Figure 5: Short-Term and Long-Term Implementation Plan for the Recommendations

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