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# COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (COMESA)

Training of Targeted Local Communities from the Moyale Border Area of Kenya and Ethiopia on Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism

**Moyale, Kenya** 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> April 2025

#### **DRAFT**

REPORT OF THE TRAINING OF TARGETED LOCAL COMMUNITIES FROM THE MOYALE BORDER AREA OF KENYA AND ETHIOPIA ON PREVENTING/COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM



2025(RK/CM/NN-rkk)

1. A training of targeted local communities from the Moyale Border area of Kenya and Ethiopia on preventing/countering violent extremism and terrorism was held from 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> April 2025 in Moyale Town, Kenya. The training workshop was organised by COMESA in collaboration with the National Counter Terrorism Center of Kenya, Horn of Africa Youth Network and Search for Common Ground. It was convened in response to the Decision of the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which, "Emphasised the need for an integrated approach across the peace and development nexus that addresses the underlying causes of conflict in the COMESA region including violent extremism." Further necessitating the holding of the training workshop were the recent security challenges, most notably – the influx of militias and terrorists at the Kenya-Ethiopia border in February 2025.

#### A. ATTENDANCE, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANISATION OF WORK

#### a. Attendance

2. The training workshop was attended by Kenyan and Ethiopian local communities, including; Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), religious and traditional leaders, women and youth led organisations and local security agencies, the National Counter-Terrorism Center of Kenya, the National Counter-Terrorism Center of Uganda, Search for Common Ground, Horn of Africa Youth Network (HoAYN) and COMESA staff. The full list of participants is attached as Annex II to the report.

#### b. The Workshop Agenda included the following:

- i. Opening Remarks
- ii. Objectives, Expected Outcomes and Adoption of the Agenda
- iii. Presentation on the COMESA Governance, Peace and Security Programme
- iv. An Introduction to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism 101
- v. Threat Assessment of Violent Extremism from a Kenyan Perspective the Moyale Border Area
- vi. Experience Sharing from the Uganda NCTC on Threats of Violent Extremism and Terrorism as well as Mitigation Mechanisms
- vii. Reflection Session
- viii. Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda and the Prevention of Violent Extremism
- ix. Gender Sensitive Approaches to P/CVE
- x. Early Warning and Early Response Systems and their Relevance to P/CVE
- xi. Essential Principles of Good Governance
- xii. Inclusive Measures in Addressing P/CVE
- xiii. Cross-Country Collaboration in CVE
- xiv. Way Forward
- xv. Closing Remarks

#### c. Organisation of Work

3. The workshop adopted the following hours of work:

Morning 0900 - 1300 hours. Afternoon 1400 - 1700 hours.

#### d. Objectives of the Training

4. The overall objective of the training was to strengthen the capacities of local communities on preventing and countering violent extremism from respective thematic lenses including governance, peace and security.

#### e. Expected Outcomes

- i. Increased understanding and awareness of participants on the strategies applicable in preventing and countering violent extremism.
- ii. Enhanced skills and competencies of local communities to actively engage in P/CVE initiatives within their respective communities.
- iii. Strengthened networking and collaboration among participants to facilitate longterm collaboration and resource-sharing.
- iv. Improved community resilience and cohesion against extremist ideologies within the targeted communities.

# f. Adoption of the Agenda

5. The Workshop Agenda was presented to the participants and was adopted without changes.

# B. Opening Remarks

- 6. The training of local communities from Kenya and Ethiopia on preventing/countering violent extremism and terrorism was officially opened by Mr. Maurice Kipkeo, Assistant County Commissioner of Moyale County. He began by expressing gratitude to COMESA Secretariat for its efforts in enhancing peace in the region in various ways such as trade - citing the Simplified Trade Regime (STR) and its potential to foster mutually beneficial bilateral relations between Kenya and Ethiopia. He further thanked the National Counter Terrorism Centre of Kenya for their efforts in the arena of counterterrorism and cited the existing awareness gap in local communities as a key issue which COMESA and its partners can collaborate in bridging through initiatives such as the holding of training workshops. Furthermore, the Assistant County Commissioner pledged unwavering support from the government in all efforts directed towards eliminating social exclusion factors, integrating women and youth in peace and security initiatives, and addressing vulnerabilities faced by local communities. The Assistant County Commissioner concluded his remarks by urging the participants to internalise the information that shall be relayed by the facilitators over the course of the training and thereafter declared the training officially open.
- 7. Prior to the official opening of the training workshop, Dr. Oita Etyang, Head of Governance, Peace and Security at the COMESA Secretariat delivered opening remarks. He conveyed greetings to the participants from the COMESA Secretary General and stated that the training is part of an initiative aimed at ensuring communities are cohesive a condition that is a prerequisite to development and prosperity. He emphasised that the collaboration of communities in devising strategies to solve their own problems is of the utmost importance, especially in the current geo-political scene that has resulted in reduced foreign aid. He concluded his remarks with the following encouraging words; "No trade will happen in the Moyale border area without peace. Give the workshop your best, share knowledge, and make Moyale great."
- 8. The Moyale Town Administration representative, Mr. Hussein Gomo, welcomed all the participants to the training workshop and applauded the gathering as one undertaken in the spirit of collaboration and commitment to making strides towards safeguarding the country and the region at large. He called attention to the impressive diverse range of participants representing various backgrounds, from security agents to religious and traditional leaders. Citing enhancing local communities' understanding and knowledge of countering violent extremism strategies as the training workshop's primary objective, Mr. Gomo stressed the importance of improving community resilience by strengthening the social fabric and encouraging partnerships. The power to create change and act as architects of peace, he stated, lies within each individual. Therefore, he emphasised that in order to prevent extremist ideologies from infiltrating society and to preserve Moyale border area as a symbol of a shared heritage and future, collective efforts and proactive engagement are essential.

- 9. Colonel Mande, representative of the NCTC, Uganda, conveyed thanks and appreciation to the Governments of Kenya and Ethiopia for facilitating the training workshop for the common good of the two sister countries and the continent as a whole. He further expressed thanks to COMESA and its partners for convening the training workshop, as well as the local administration and security at the border area. Security, respect for human rights, and observance of the rule of law, he further stated, are prerequisites for development. As such, preventing/countering violent extremism and terrorism requires a whole-society approach, in collaboration with regional bodies, as terrorism can occur anywhere, at any time. In concluding his remarks, he underscored the need for local communities to learn from each other's experiences in order to ensure the workshop's success.
- 10. On behalf of the Director of the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) of Kenya, Mr. Jefferson Thuo provided remarks and expressed his deepest appreciation to the COMESA Secretariat and the partners for convening the training workshop. Mr. Thuo noted the training as an opportunity to learn from one another and share strategic experiences on ways to address and combat terrorism. Whilst highlighting the Moyale border' area's peculiarity, Mr. Thuo underscored its official crossing point which brings together not only a border but also the same culture and beliefs which is very unique especially when it comes to fighting violent extremism. The NCTC representative expressed hope that some of the issues were going to be highlighted from the discussions and best practices borrowed from the shared experiences. In concluding his remarks, Mr. Thuo iterated that the combat of violent extremism and terrorism is not a one-country effort, neither is it the responsibility of any one-Government, but it is the duty of the society as a whole. Thus, it is against this context that the training workshop had brought about a multitude of stakeholders from various agencies and backgrounds.
- 11. Representing the partners, Mr. David Momanyi, Director of the Horn of Africa Youth Network, delivered opening remarks that highlighted one of the training workshop's strengths a wide representation of partners, from the National Counter Terrorism Centre Kenya, to COMESA, Save the Children, and local NGO the Nuru Trust Network. He further expressed gratitude for the presence and participation of the various delegations. The training workshop, he stated, remains a crucial aspect of the partners' scope and nature of work. Lastly, he wished the participants fruitful discussions throughout the training.

### C. COMESA's Governance, Peace and Security Programme

12. An interactive session on the COMESA Governance, Peace and Security (GPS) Programme was conducted, highlighting the various challenges which faced the African continent in the post-independence era, namely; poverty, illiteracy and disease. These challenges necessitated the creation of regional economic communities (RECs). Currently, there are eight RECs that are recognised by the African Union (AU), of which COMESA is the largest. Further outlined were the various COMESA programmes on Governance, Peace and Security that have been developed over the years and implemented in close collaboration with the African Union, Regional Economic Communities (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms (RMs), development partners, and other key stakeholders. These programmes are depicted in the graphic below:



# D. An Introduction to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism 101

- 13. This session provided a foundational understanding of radicalization and violent extremism, especially within the African context. It defined radicalization as the process through which individuals adopt extremist beliefs that may lead to violence and describes violent extremism as ideologically driven violence aiming to achieve political, religious, or social goals. The session also highlighted the devastating impacts of violent extremism across Africa, including; loss of life, displacement, breakdown of social cohesion, food insecurity, and youth vulnerability. It further underscored statistics; over 45 million forcibly displaced Africans, and discussed how violent extremism continues to threaten development, particularly in a number of Member States including; Ethiopia and Kenya. In terms of challenges, other key issues such as ethnic tensions, scarce resources, limited state presence, and cross-border dynamics, including Al-Shabaab's activities were identified.
- 14. The session outlined the root causes of extremism, which were categorized into push and pull factors across social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental dimensions. These included marginalization, poverty, governance failures, cultural discrimination, and resource scarcity. Conversely, extremist groups often attract individuals by offering a sense of purpose, belonging, or financial gain. Crucially, the presentation advocated for community-based strategies in P/CVE. Local communities including religious and traditional leaders, as well as youth, and women-led organizations were noted as key stakeholders that play vital roles in building resilience, countering extremist narratives, and fostering peace. The importance of effective strategies to address P/CVE were also highlighted. These included education programs, community policing, interfaith dialogue, and digital literacy initiatives with an example of the Nuru's Vijana Digital Program based in Kenya.
- 15. Lastly, the session stressed the importance of context-sensitive approaches tailored to local realities and evolving threats, reinforcing that sustainable peace can only be achieved through inclusive, grassroots efforts. The session concluded with an interactive activity to reflect on key concepts and methods of stakeholder engagement.

#### **Group Work and Presentations**

16. Following the discussions, the session continued with the participants being tasked with carrying out the following activity and providing presentations to that effect;

#### Activity:

# <u>Analyse Factors and Roles in Countering Violent Extremism</u> <u>Factors:</u>

- i. Psychological
- ii. Technological
- iii. Educational
- iv. Global Dynamics

#### Task 1: For each factor below, list:

- i. Push factors (drivers toward extremism)
- ii. Pull factors (attractions to extremism)
- iii. Manifestations (how extremism shows)
- iv. Outcomes (impacts on individuals/communities)

# Task 2: Identify the role of these actors in countering VE narratives for each factor:

- i. Religious Leaders
- ii. Educators and Schools
- iii. Youth and Women Groups

# iv. Local Authorities and NGOs

# a. Group A

Task 1: Factors in Countering Violent Extremism					
Factors	Push Factors	Pull Factors	Manifestations	Outcomes	
Psychological	-Isolation -Marginalisation -Lack of opportunities -Depression and identity crises	-Sense of belonging and community -Genuine opportunity -Peer pressure -Religious or ideological fulfilment	-Radical beliefs or behaviours (e.g.: isolation, locking oneself in a room)	-Increased violence -Mental illness -Societal division -Death	
Technological	Online radicalization platforms     Accessibility of extremist content     Spread of misinformation	-Anonymity -Easy access to content -Educational and income opportunities	-Recruitment via social media platforms	-Spread of extremist ideologies -Cyber threats -Social media conflicts	
Educational	Poor education systems     Lack of critical thinking     skills     Poor infrastructure and     student-teacher     relationships	-Educational opportunities (e.g., scholarships) -Leadership and employment potential -Ideologically biased materials	-Recruitment in educational settings (e.g., child marriage)	-Increased youth susceptibility to radicalization -School dropouts -Poverty -Illiteracy	
Environmental	Socioeconomic instability     Unequal distribution of resources     Political oppression	-Promises of change -Aspirations of a luxurious lifestyle	-Community mobilization around extremist causes	-Escalation of conflicts -Community fragmentation	
Global Dynamics	- Diaspora disconnection - Geopolitical conflicts - Foreign interventions - Cultural/media influence (e.g., Money Heist) - Globalization - Insecurity	political conflicts eign interventions tural/media influence Money Heist) balization  narratives -Sense of global belonging -Access to resources and employment Safer		-Regional instability -Heightened international security threats	
	Task 2: Roles of Act	ors in Countering Violen	t Extremism		
Actor			Role		
Religious Leaders		· ·	Promote peace through dialogue and reinterpretation of extremist narratives; foster understanding within communities.		
Educators/Schools		against extremist ide	Foster critical thinking, inclusivity, and awareness; help inoculate students against extremist ideologies.		
Youth and Women Groups		alternative narratives	Empower marginalized populations; provide support networks and alternative narratives to extremism.		
Local Authorities and NGOs  Implement grassroots programs; facilitate community dialogus social grievances to prevent radicalization		ity dialogue; address			

b. Group B

Task 1: Factors in Countering Violent Extremism		
Factors	Push Factors	Pull Factors
Psychological	-Feelings of marginalization -Unmet needs (economic, unemployment, politics, etc)	- Wrong Narratives -Incentives
Technological	-The urge to know -The ability to use anonymous social media accounts -The need to get rich quick -Social exclusion factors -Poverty	-Promise of money -Promise of scholarships -Job opportunities
Educational	-Inequitable access to education -Ideological indoctrination -Inadequate civic education -Unemployment and skill mismatch -Underfunding of education	-Promise of scholarships -Charismatic radical educators -Radicalizing Literature
Environmental	-Resource scarcity -Climate change and displacement	-Promise of development project -Monetary incentives
Global Dynamics	-Global inequalities and economic disparities     -Geopolitical complexities     -Displacement due to crisis	-Ideological appeal -Charismatic leadership -Peer pressure and social networks -Glorification of violence

-Weaponization of ideologies -Digital Globalization			
Task 2: Roles of Actors in Countering Violent Extremism			
Actor	Role		
Religious Leaders	-Spiritual nourishment -Consistent and timely sensitization programs within the religious institutions -Sanctioning vices in the society through the religious lens and glorifying morality		
Educators and Schools	-Provision of quality education -Censored curriculum -Education on countering radicalizing narratives -Mentorship programs		
Youth and Women Groups	-Peer-to-peer advocacy on counter narrative -Mentorships		
Local Authorities and NGOs	-Utilize public barazas to amplify counter narrative -Effective and efficient service delivery -Ensure accountability and transparency -Collaborating with stakeholders to promote SMEs through the provision of cheap credits and facilitation of business incentives -Funded community-led initiatives in preventing and countering violent extremism and narrative.		

Task 1: Factors in Countering Violent Extremism				
Factors	Push Factors	Pull Factors		
Psychological	-Marginalization -Trauma and resolved grief from violence and abuse -Low self esteem -Frustration and anger -Lack of purpose in life -Perceived injustice or oppression	-Inclusivity -sense of belonging and brotherhood/sisterhood offered by the groupClear identity and purposeRecognition and status within the groupEmpowerment and meaning - especially for youth who feel voicelessExcitement or adventure sometimes tied to the idea of heroism or martyrdomStability /harmony -Mental illness		
Technological	-Cyber crime -Lack of new technology -Exposure to extreme propaganda	-Propaganda -Adaptation of new technology		
Educational	-Lack of quality education -No access to school of drop out -Lack of awareness (illiteracy) -High Poverty level -Inadequate facilities e.g. laboratory -Feeling of injustice or exclusion if certain group are marginalized in a groupUnemployment despite education leading to hopelessness -Ideologically biased education or hate-filled curriculum that promotes intolerance	-Quality education -Access to school -Emphasizing importance of education -Free basic education and scholarshipStrengthen education system -Providing a sense of purpose and identity		
Environmental	-Climate change e.g. floods, drought.	-Plenty of natural resources like water, soil		

	<ul> <li>-Inadequate natural resources.</li> <li>-Inequality in resource sharing by the government</li> <li>-Deforestation</li> </ul>	fertility, pastureEquity sharing of resources -Afforestation
-Bad governance e.g. corrupt government -Extra judicial killing and abduction -Unemployment -War -Ideological factors -Poverty -Climate Change		-Good governance -Employment -Stability -Education -Creating alternative way of living e.g. women empowerment by fundraising -Climate change mitigation
Task 2: Roles of Actors in Countering Violent Extremism		
	Actor	Role
Religious Leaders		-Preaching social cohesion
Religious Leaders		-Mediate between parties -Intergenerational Dialogues
Educators/Schools		-Mediate between parties
		-Mediate between parties -Intergenerational Dialogues -Including civic and ethical education

# d. Group D

Task 1: Factors in Countering Violent Extremism				
Factors	Push Factors	Pull Factors	Manifestations	Outcomes
Psychological	-Mental disease (disorder) -Drug abuse (drunkenness) -Social isolation (loneliness)	-Peer pressure -Sense of belonging -Heroism	-Causing violence, chaos and disorder -Disturbances, engagement in criminal activities, excessive drinking, stress leading to frustrations -Group thinking (mob psychology) -Tribalism -Joining terror groups	-Death -Breaking of social order -Loneliness to the victim -Breaking of family ties -Decay of community morals -Waste of resources furthering poverty for the family -Suicide -Depression -Enmity between families -Engaging in criminal activities -Behavioural changes -Drug abuse -Ethnic Clashes
Technological	-Exposure to online hatred	-Online peer group	-Hate speech -Following propaganda -Being in wrong online social groups	-Ethnic division -Tension -Radicalized youths
Educational	-Poor education quality -Limited access to education	-Revenge narrative -Radicalization	-School dropout  -Failure in exams  -Lack of appreciation to government  -Hatred  -Wrong teachings, misleading the youths	-Joining terror group as alternative -Drop out Engagement in criminal activities -Causing mass killing -Increased enmity -Killing of even friends
Environmental	-Climate Change	-Provision of resources by terror groups	-Drought, flooding -Sufficient supply of basic needs like water, food, shelter and financial support	-Conflict over resources, ethnic clashes, infrastructural destruction, diseases

					-Increased recruitment and radicalization, destabilization of regions due to reduced population, lowering labor productivity
Global Dynamics	-Global political marginalization	-Glo	orification of terror ters	-Rise in antigovernment sentiments  -Joining of terror by more people	-Protests leading to deaths -Property destruction -Increased terrorism acts -Fear and deaths
Task 2: Roles of Actors in Cou			in Countering Violen	t Extremism	
Actor		Role			
Religious Leaders  Educators/Schools		Sensitize communities on importance of staying away from drug and substance abuse, provide parental guidance on social media platform usage for the youths, offer guidance to education stakeholders and students through PPI teachings, and spearhead conflict management between warring parties over natural resources.  Offer guidance and counseling on the factors leading youths to become perpetrators of terror activities, prevent students and youths from engaging in dangerous websites, ensure quality of education is of high			
		standards and same across all institutions, and help in creating social unity among learners to eradicate perception of tribal differences.			
Youth and Women Groups		Empowering youths in provision of alternative source of living, create awareness on the existing unlawful websites for access to the youths, advocate for children's equal education right, and help in ensuring protection of environment and its resources.			
Local Authorities and NGOs		the youth to sustain perpetrators, help in and school stakehol	ization on impact of drug abus themselves, take legal action infrastructural improvement a ders on PCVE agenda, and to munity in increasing their resi	against the and training teachers aking part in capacity	

# E. Threat Assessment of Violent Extremism from a Kenyan Perspective – the Moyale Border Area

- The presentation provided a comprehensive assessment of the security threats posed by violent extremism and terrorism in Kenya's Moyale border region. Moyale's strategic location along the Kenya-Ethiopia border makes it a vital transit point but also exposes it to significant security risks due to its porous borders, harsh arid environment, and complex ethnic dynamics. In addition, it was noted that the region faces spillover effects from neighbouring conflicts, illicit trade in weapons and contraband, inconsistent security cooperation between Kenya and Ethiopia, as well as challenges associated with refugee movements. Key threat actors were further identified including Somalia-based Al-Shabaab, which exploits local grievances and recruits vulnerable individuals, local ethnic militias susceptible to extremist influence, criminal smuggling networks, and foreign entities seeking regional destabilisation. The presentation also highlighted recruitment by extremists which leverages economic incentives, direct targeting, community infiltration, and religious manipulation. The attack methodologies ranged from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and armed assaults to kidnappings and intimidation tactics. Enabling factors such as economic marginalisation, weak governance, ethnic tensions, and border porosity were noted to have facilitated the existence of extremism in Kenya.
- 18. In tandem with the NCTC Kenya's rally call of "if you see something, say something", the presentation underscored key security initiatives that respond to the identified threats including border patrols, intelligence gathering, community policing, and inter-agency coordination. However, it was noted that these initiatives are hampered by intelligence gaps, resource constraints, logistical challenges, and strained community relations, not forgetting vulnerability hotspots including unmonitored border crossings, isolated communities, and urban centers like the Moyale town of Kenya. Despite these challenges, community resilience has been supported by traditional leadership, religious institutions, women's groups, and youth organisations.

19. The presentation concluded with recommendations on the need to enhance border security with technology, strengthening community engagement, targeting youth unemployment, and improving regional cooperation for intelligence sharing and coordinated security operations. To address these issues, there is the need for integrated strategies combining security, governance, and economic development.

# F. Experience Sharing from the Uganda NCTC on Threats of Violent Extremism and Terrorism as well as Mitigation Mechanisms

- 20. The Uganda National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) shared its experience on addressing the threats of Violent Extremism and the appropriate mitigation measures. The presentation highlighted that Uganda has faced persistent threats from terrorism and violent extremism, with groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Al-Shabaab, and the Islamic State in Central Africa Province (ISCAP) operating in the country since the late 1980s. The LRA, led by Joseph Kony, was largely defeated in Uganda, though its remnants remain active in neighbouring countries. As for the ADF, it was initially responsible for deadly attacks and bombings in the late 1990s and in early 2000s, it evolved into a transnational threat with formal ties to the Islamic State, orchestrating attacks in Uganda and the region. It was further noted that Al-Shabaab, linked to Al-Qaeda, carried out the 2010 Kampala bombings, killing 79 people, and continues to pose a threat.
- 21. Uganda's response has been comprehensive involving legal reforms such as the Anti-Terrorism Act, creation of specialised agencies like the Joint Anti-Terrorism Task Force and enhanced inter-agency and international cooperation. The country's National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE), adopted in 2022, focuses on community engagement, youth empowerment, education, and counter-radicalisation, targeting at-risk areas including urban centers, prisons, and online spaces. In terms of successes, the presentation underscored foiling a number of major terrorist attacks, prosecuting perpetrators, and rehabilitating former combatants. However, it was iterated that Uganda continues to face ongoing challenges such as asymmetrical warfare tactics, foreign terrorism financing, and the overlap with other transnational crimes. The presentation also emphasised the of sustained regional and international collaboration to effectively counter evolving terrorist threats.

#### **Discussions and Observations**

- 22. Following the two presentations, the following questions and observations emerged:
  - a. A concern was raised regarding what risk mitigation strategies could be utilised by individuals in possession of sensitive, potentially dangerous information. In response, it was advised that extreme care must be taken when utilising social media accounts as terror groups possess the technical know-how to hack devices. The participants were further advised to rid themselves of any information that might put them at risk.
  - b. Another concern was raised on identification of the signs that could be used to recognize an individual under threat of active radicalisation. In response, it was stated that some of the major glaring signs include; alienation from family and friends, consumption of radical online content, spontaneous access to finance, and uncharacteristic security consciousness. Additionally, emphasis was placed on exercising vigilance when interacting with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and certain educational institutions such as "madrasas" as they may have hidden agendas.
  - c. A question arose regarding the manner in which adults and children affected by violent extremism and terrorism are demobilised and reintegrated into society. In response, it was stated that children affected by conflict trauma are typically handed

- over to international organisations such as UNICEF, GUSCO and World Vision to provide psychosocial support to the children before their reintegration into society. Adult individuals are also provided with alternative sources of income, taken to rehabilitation centres, and exposed to non-extremist narratives in order to dismantle their radical views.
- d. The issue of guarding against false job recruiters, which is intricately linked to violent extremism, was raised, and a representative of the NCTC Kenya briefed the participants on a joint venture between the Ministries of Labour and ICT, and security agencies. Thus far, several false recruiters have been taken through the criminal justice system and monitoring is ongoing. Moreover, a small taskforce on cybersecurity has been established to counter the issue of mobile scamming.

#### G. Reflection Session

23. The participants engaged as two groups, representing Kenya and Ethiopia respectively, in order to discuss and reflect and share their experiences on countering violent extremism and terrorism. The table below showcases the causes of violent extremism that emerged from the two groups' discussions:

Perceived Causes of Violent Extremism and Terrorism		
Kenya	Ethiopia	
Illegal mining	Illiteracy and poverty leading to unemployment	
Drug and Human Trafficking	Selling of petroleum illegally	
Kidnapping	Ethnic conflicts brought about by illegal mining	
Presence of Local Militias	The need to be rich has led to violent extremism	
Perceived joint alliance of Al Shabab and other extremist groups	Lack of communication between government and community bodies	

# H. Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda and the Prevention of Violent Extremism

- 24. The YPS agenda, anchored in UN Security Council Resolutions 2250, 2419, and 2535, and the AU Continental Framework on YPS and implemented under National Action Plans on YPS, calls for youth participation, protection, and leadership in peacebuilding. It aligns closely with CVE strategies that address the root causes of radicalisation and promote inclusive governance. In addition, the YPS Agenda emphasises prevention, recognising that violence often stems from exclusion, lack of opportunity, and identity-based grievances. The five pillars of YPS agenda; participation, protection, prevention, partnership, and disengagement, mirror CVE's goals of early warning, resilience-building, and community-based responses.
- 25. The presentation further highlighted youth as not only vulnerable to extremist recruitment but are also critical agents of change. Across Africa, young people are leading peace clubs, peace committees, online campaigns against hate speech, and cross-border networks that support early warning and conflict resolution. These efforts demonstrate how youth-led initiatives directly contribute to the goals of CVE. Importantly, linking YPS with CVE strengthens both agendas. It was also emphasised that youth inclusion improves policy relevance and effectiveness, reduces vulnerability to radicalisation, and builds trust between communities and institutions. However, youth, especially young women, remain underrepresented in formal CVE policies and spaces.
- 26. To bridge this gap, the presentation provided policy recommendations such as; Mainstreaming YPS in national CVE strategies, providing sustainable funding for youth-led peace initiatives, ensuring youth representation in policymaking processes and fostering collaboration between youth networks, governments, and civil society should be prioritised. Lastly, integrating YPS and CVE efforts offers a concrete framework for advancing peace, resilience, development and youth leadership.

#### **Discussions and Observations**

27. Following the presentation, an inquiry regarding the challenges faced in advancing the YPS agenda was raised. – In response, it was stated that there is an absence of a localised YPS Agenda at the grassroots community level, thus the need for continued sensitisation. Moreover, the challenge of limited funding for youth-led peacebuilding initiatives continues to negatively impact the undertaking of initiatives. Lastly, the lack of or limited political buy-in from governments presents as a significant challenge.

# I. Gender Sensitive Approaches to P/CVE

- 28. A presentation detailing gender sensitive approaches to the prevention and countering of violent extremism was given organised around the following objectives:
  - a. To understand the importance of mainstreaming gender across P/CVE initiatives. to understand and communicate how gender equality and women's empowerment are linked to P/CVE.
  - b. To identify measures to mainstream gender into P/CVE programmes and challenges encountered.
- 29. The difference in the push and pull factors in conflict and non-conflict contexts and the variations between men and women were explored, and the presentation progressed to set the basis for further engagement on the trends that may drive radicalisation at the community level in both countries and the role of women in P/CVE. It was agreed that the understanding of gender is socially constructed and is reflected in the roles, behaviours and qualities that a community or society considers appropriate or acceptable for women, men, girls and boys. It was further stated that gender is also a lens through which people's roles and access (or lack thereof) in communities and societies are shaped, such as access to leadership, economic resources, or education.
- 30. Various roles were outlined, including; victims, supporters, fighters, and more explicit advocates of extremist ideology. However, it was emphasised that many women not only join violent extremists freely and of their own accord but also willingly and voluntarily participate in violent extremism in varied and active ways; including as combatants, suicide bombers and violent actors. Women are also more often victims of the actions of violent extremist groups, suffering from sexual violence and rape, restrictive limitations to their freedom of movement, and in some cases, essentially becoming enslaved to the men in violent extremist groups. Moreover, women perform "softer" duties such as providing inspiration and emotional and psychological support to the male fighters or overseeing non-violent activities such as finance and group operations.
- 31. Furthermore, it was highlighted that early PVE programs focused almost exclusively on 'angry young men' as the face of violent extremism. As a result, in addition to military-style campaigns, the key actors engaged in finding solutions are male leaders, such as male community leaders, religious leaders, and former combatants who could promote moderate narratives and counter extremist ideologies. This concentration on a specific type of male experience meant that other voices, such as those of women, were lacking, which has had negative consequences for PVE policy and programs. Although counter-terrorism interventions, focused on hard security and primarily military-style interventions, have tended to ignore gender perspectives, institutional and local actors in P/CVE have generally been more intentional about recognising women's roles in all facets of extremism.

#### **Discussions and Observations**

32. Following the presentation, participants noted that P/CVE efforts should always consider the local context before deciding how to structure their initiative and which actors to work and collaborate with. It was agreed that that there was need for community-level P/CVE

interventions to include diverse perspectives by ensuring women and youth are involved in the design and implementation of these interventions.

# J. Early Warning and Early Response Systems and their Relevance to P/CVE

- 33. Early Warning and Early Response Systems were explored in this session, and their relevance to P/CVE was established. At the onset, early warning was understood as a process that:
  - a. Alerts decision makers to the potential outbreak, escalation and/or resurgence of violent conflict;
  - b. Promotes an understanding among decision makers of the nature and impacts of violent conflict: and
  - c. Involves the regular collection and analysis of data on conflicts, and its dissemination to decision-makers.
- 34. Early Warning Systems were further emphasised as crucial for the prevention of violent extremism as they work to identify potential threats towards enabling timely responses to address the root causes and drivers of radicalisation which signify the initial stages of violent extremism. Moreover, the provision of early reports, such as Alerts, and public awareness campaigns, were identified as essential in empowering decision-makers, communities, and security agencies and other interested parties to take proactive measures to prevent the spread of extremism and promote resilience.
- 35. Additionally, the essence of early warning and response in preventing and countering violent extremism was discussed highlighting the link between early warning and early response, that is, early warning entails information collection, analysis, and dissemination. Early warning is also the generation of relevant and timely reports that are targeted to relevant actors, capacity building and the involvement of both state and non-state actors at various levels including local, national, cross-border and regional. This is due to the fact that networking, partnerships and coordination is key.
- 36. It was further established that in order for responses to be effective and sustainable, a clear understanding of the threats is paramount. This can be achieved through the utilisation of early warning systems. Response entities ought to have the relevant mandate and the necessary capacities in the form of human, material and financial resources, as well as policy provisions. As is the case with early warning, multi-agency coordination remains essential.
- 37. In conclusion, it was iterated that early warning systems are a critical and crucial component of any comprehensive strategy towards preventing radicalization and violent extremism. Through the identification of vulnerabilities, monitoring of indicators, and the alerting of the relevant actors, early warning systems help create a more secure and resilient environment where communities are less vulnerable to radicalization, violent extremism and violence.

#### **Discussions and Observations**

- 38. Following the presentation, the undermentioned questions and observations emerged:
  - a. A question concerning the presence of a large number of security checkpoints along the Moyale-Isiolo Highway was raised, with remarks that they are unnecessary. In response, their presence was justified in that a mapping of the region has been done over the past decade, revealing persistent patterns of transnational organised crimes across the region including issues of illegal arms trade, human and drug trafficking among others. Moreover, it was emphasised that special attention needed to be paid to the insecurity present in neighbouring countries, such as Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, which had immense spillover effects.

b. A clarification was sought regarding the link between early warning and early response. It was explained that early warning must be followed up by early response in order to ensure that the identified issues and threats are followed by actions and solutions. This would prevent feelings of desperation and despair from arising within communities due to inaction on early warning provided. Furthermore, it was stated that both Government institutions and civil society organisations can take up early response initiatives.

# K. Essential Principles of Good Governance

- 39. The essential principles of good governance, in relation to local community governance, were highlighted in the presentation, in order to affirm the role of local community leaders in P/CVE. Good governance was defined as a process that involves the effective and responsible exercise of power by public institutions to meet societal needs while maximising resource utilisation. Transparency, accountability and responsiveness, as well as upholding the rule of law and human rights, were emphasised as essential factors in ensuring inclusive and sustainable development. This, in turn, creates an environment where all voices are heard, decisions are fair and equitable, and resources are utilised efficiently.
- 40. The following core principles were highlighted:

Participation	Transparency	Efficiency
Consensus-orientation	Responsiveness	Equity
Accountability	Effectiveness	Inclusiveness

41. Furthermore, it was stated that good governance also encompasses additional principles, namely;

Human Dignity	Patriotism
National Unity	Sharing and Devolution of Power
Social Justice	Sustainability

- 42. The presentation further discussed the nexus between good governance and conflict prevention, stating that when governmental systems are transparent and accountable, conditions that often lead to conflict such as corruption and mismanagement are effectively reduced. Good governance also reduces risks of conflict by addressing grievances and ensuring equitable resource distribution. In this manner, trust is fostered and instability prevented.
- 43. Moreover, the presentation tackled the enhancing of local governance structures by asserting that as local governance is the frontline of community management, strengthening local institutions, such as city administrators, municipalities and community-based organisations, is essential in addressing the unique challenges found in border regions, including cross-border crime and resource disputes. Strengthening local institutions also works to improve service delivery and crisis response. Accountability in governance, it was emphasised, ensures that public officials and security agencies operate under scrutiny and in the public interest. Thus, mechanisms such as audits, public forums and oversight bodies are vital in maintaining accountability.
- 44. The presentation acknowledged that governance gaps often exist especially in areas with complex border dynamics. Common issues include; limited community engagement, inadequate resource allocation, bureaucratic hurdles, lack of transparency, weak institutions and limited citizen participation. Therefore, building trust between the government and the community, through transparent communication channels and public consultations, is critical in navigating these issues.

45. Lastly, the presentation highlighted the role of youth in governance. It was stressed that youth represent a significant force for change in the form of fresh ideas, the strengthening of accountability, and long-term community development. This engagement of youth can be achieved through leadership programs, civic education and advisory councils. Crucially, youth perspectives ought to be included in decision-making to ensure policies address their needs and aspirations.

### L. Inclusive Measures in Addressing Violent Extremism (VE)

- 46. The presentation underscored the imperative of integrating grievance resolution and inclusive participation into Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) frameworks, with a focus on Moyale Town in Marsabit County, Kenya. It was emphasised that sustainable peace in this ethnically diverse, border-region community hinges on addressing systemic inequities, including political marginalisation, youth unemployment, and gender-based exclusion. To counter these drivers of radicalisation, the discussion advocated for the institutionalisation of inclusive platforms that amplify the voices of women, youth, elders, and local leaders. Such structures not only enhance social cohesion but also strengthen early warning systems (EWS) by fostering community-led monitoring of radicalisation risks. Youth-focused interventions—such as safe spaces, vocational training, and educational access—were prioritised to disrupt extremist recruitment, while women's inclusion in decision-making roles was identified as critical for conflict mediation and trust-building.
- 47. The discussion further highlighted the operationalisation of community-based reporting mechanisms, which rely on confidential, culturally sensitive channels to share security threats with authorities. These systems depend on collaborative partnerships between local actors, civil society, and security agencies to enable timely interventions. Given Moyale's porous borders, cross-border cooperation with neighbouring Ethiopia was deemed essential, particularly through joint intelligence-sharing, harmonised EWS, and bilateral peace initiatives.
- 48. Overall, the presentation stressed that effective P/CVE requires hyperlocal ownership, with resilience rooted in equitable participation, intergenerational dialogue, and adaptive governance structures responsive to socio-economic and geopolitical vulnerabilities. By centring trust and inclusivity, stakeholders can address both the symptoms and structural roots of violent extremism in high-risk regions.

#### **Discussions and Observations**

- 49. Following the presentation, a discussion ensued with various observations being brought forth, and several questions were posed as follows:
  - a. A recommendation was proffered regarding the enhancement of the prevention and countering of violent extremism. It was stated that law enforcement in both Kenya and Ethiopia needs to be strengthened, and clear-cut national laws ought to be passed.
  - b. An inquiry was made concerning the inclusion of youths and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Moyale Peace Committees. It was established that both Persons with Disabilities and the gender equality factor are considered.
  - c. A concern was raised as to whether a project aimed at sensitising the community on the concept of preventing/countering violent extremism currently exists in Moyale. It was affirmed that there is a currently ongoing project.
  - d. The issue of harassment faced by youth engaging in cross-border activities, such as trade, was raised. In response, the presenter stated that community bodies ought to hold meetings and initiate dialogue to dismantle narratives and values that feed harassment behaviours.

e. A participant posed a question regarding how authorities and frameworks can ensure response is undertaken in a timely manner. The presenter emphasised that a timely response is highly dependent on timely reporting.

# M. Cross-Border Collaboration in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

- 50. The presentation set the stage by examining the context of extremism in Africa and the need to move beyond siloed country-specific interventions. It also highlighted institutional collaboration, stressing the need for sustained partnerships rather than temporary responses. These include regular bilateral meetings between Kenyan and Ethiopian security agencies, cross-border peace committees, and formal agreements for community resource sharing, such as co-funded infrastructure projects and joint training for security personnel.
- 51. The presentation further focused on building effective regional partnerships between Kenya and Ethiopia as a means of addressing their shared threat of violent extremism. Recognizing that conflict and radicalization often transcend national boundaries, the presentation emphasised the importance of collaborative strategies in countering these challenges more effectively.
- 52. A brainstorming session proceeded with participants from both Kenya and Ethiopia proposing country-specific strategies tailored to their unique challenges and community dynamics as depicted in the tables below.

## a. Kenya

✓ Establishment of modernised cargo scanners.  Abductions     ✓ Documentation of local missionaries and tourists with the office of the government.     ✓ Revitalisation of Nyumba Kumi initiatives.     ✓ Availing resources to peace communities for facilitation and strengthening them in their security initiatives.  Relig  Local Militias     ✓ Multi-agency approach to deter emergence of local militias.     ✓ Strengthening of NPR (National Police Reservists).	Development of cross-border PCVE strategies, agreements and legal frameworks.  Enforcement of laws and intelligence sharing.  Capacity building through training and resource provision to the security personnel and peace committees.  If and International Organisations  Facilitating cooperation to help in aligning national PCVE strategies.  Offering technical support in terms of tools, experts and funds.  Ciety Organisations  Raising awareness and countering extremist narratives at the
<ul> <li>✓ Disarmament of both small arms and sophisticated weapons holders.</li> <li>✓ Sharing of information among the security heads on a daily basis on security updates in the county.</li> </ul>	grassroots level. Work with partners on both sides to develop joint initiatives. Providing early warning signs.  Is Leaders and Elders Promote peaceful teaching and challenge extremist ideologies. Mentorship programs to vulnerable youths.  Avoiding sensationalism that can fuel extremists. Promotion of inclusive messages. Highlighting PCVE success achieved.
Activity 2: Provide potential areas of collaboration with Ethiopia in the border area.	evention and countering of Violent Extremism in the Moyale

# b. Ethiopia

Dissemination of the signed agreement and declaration of the cross-border peace committees to all stakeholders.

Cross-border trading to enhance interaction and cooperation. Joint capacity-building programs on governance, peace, and security.

Formation of joint interfaith council, youths, women, and elders' forums platforms.

Actors
Government (Ministry of Peace, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Trade, FDRE Communication Bureau, Ministry of Sport and Culture)
Religious Leaders  Support in praying and preaching social cohesion Initiating intergenerational dialogue the prevention and countering of Violent Extremism in the Moyale border
ale, Magado-Forole, Dillo-Dukana, etc.)
ween Kenya and Ethiopia.

# N. Way Forward

53. A key outcome of the training workshop was a collectively agreed way forward (recommendations) from both Kenyan and Ethiopian participants, as provided in the table below:

# a. Kenya

Act	tivity 3: (a) What are the key initiatives and steps that will be implemented by stakeholders to prevent and counter violent extremism					
and terrorism in your community?						
✓	Creation of a one-stop border digital platform where intelligence reports are shared among the interested parties, especially from the security sectors.					
✓	Modernising surveillance at strategic entry points.					
✓	Gazettement of the other three border corridors along Kenya-Ethiopia border ( Sololo-Mio, Dukana-Dilo, and Forole-Dirre, scaling down challenges occasioned by porous border points).					
✓	Coming up with structured ways of mining by artisanal miners to work freely.					
(b) How can COMESA, NCTCs of Kenya and Uganda, and partners fast-track the prevention and combat against violent extremism in the Moyale border area?						
✓	Speeding up the signing of the Simplified Trade Regime (STR).					
✓	Harmonising customs regulations and laws between Kenya and Ethiopia.					
✓	Benchmarking of the peace committees to visit other borders on the continent for experience sharing and learning.					

# b. Ethiopia

A	Activity 3: (a) What are the key initiatives and steps that will be implemented by stakeholders to prevent and counter violent extremism						
	and terrorism in your community?						
✓	Establish community-based early warning and Anticipatory Action systems.						
✓	Launch PCVE education in schools and community centers.						
✓	Empower youth through job creation and civic engagement.						
✓	Involve traditional and religious leaders in peace-building efforts.						
✓	Organize culture and sports festivals regularly on the border.						
✓	Media campaign using multiple languages.						
(	(b) How can COMESA, NCTs Kenya and Uganda, and partners fast-track the prevention and combat against violent extremism in the						
	Moyale border area?						
✓	Facilitate cross-border coordination and policy harmonisation.						
✓	Provide financial and technical support for grassroots initiatives (e.g. Peace Forums, etc.)						
✓	Conduct joint peace-building campaigns and intelligence sharing.						
✓	Fast-track implementation of regional agreements on security and development.						

# O. Closing Session

54. The training Workshop was officially closed by Mr. Maurice Kipkeo, the Assistant County Commissioner of Moyale County. He appreciated COMESA and its partners for the successful

unfolding of the 4-day training and lauded the immense knowledge that had been gained by the participants. He further advocated for the convening of Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops in the future in a bid to sustain the momentum and interest that has been initiated, as a means of bridging the existing awareness gap. He further called on participants active in religious facilities such as mosques to utilise these platforms to demystify stereotypes and counter violent extremism. Lastly, he stressed that preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism requires the timely collection of data to ensure timely response.

- 55. Dr. Oita Etyang, Head of Governance, Peace and Security at the COMESA Secretariat, in his closing remarks, expressed appreciation for the support accorded by the Kenyan and Ethiopian governments and highlighted the presence of the Assistant County Commissioner of Moyale County throughout the training workshop. He stated that it is incumbent upon all members of society to contribute to the fight against societal ills such as violent extremism and terrorism. "Ask yourself, at the end of every day, what have I contributed today?" he urged the participants. Moreover, he emphasised the importance of actively involving youth in shaping the agenda of their communities and countries at large. In concluding his closing remarks, Dr. Etyang pledged COMESA's continued support of future initiatives at the Moyale border area, alongside various partners, including activities that effectively blend aspects of trade and peace in fostering development.
- 56. Mr. Jefferson Thuo further provided closing remarks on behalf of the Director of the National Counter Terrorism Centre of Kenya. He underscored a key rallying call do away with radicalisation and violent extremism in local communities through concerted and inclusive efforts. This, he stated, is due to the fact that the issue of violent extremism is a whole-society affair. In the same vein, he encouraged the recognition of women, youth, and Persons with Disabilities as critical actors in P/CVE strategies. He further expressed elation at the exchange of ideas that took place during the training workshop and left the participants with the following words; "If you want to go far, go together" a quote that places collaboration at the centre of P/CVE efforts.

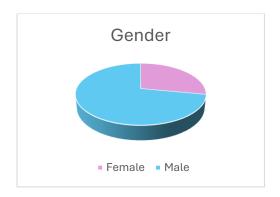
# **Moyale Training Evaluation Report**

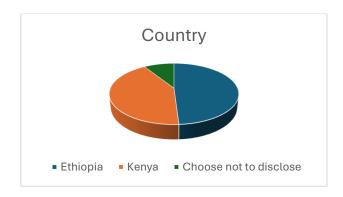
### Overview

This Evaluation Report provides an in-depth analysis of the training workshop of local communities from Kenya and Ethiopia held at the Moyale border. The evaluation process employed a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework, particularly the utilisation of feedback forms as the M&E tool to ensure a comprehensive assessment aimed at highlighting areas of success and identifying opportunities for improvement, thereby guiding future implementation of similar trainings.

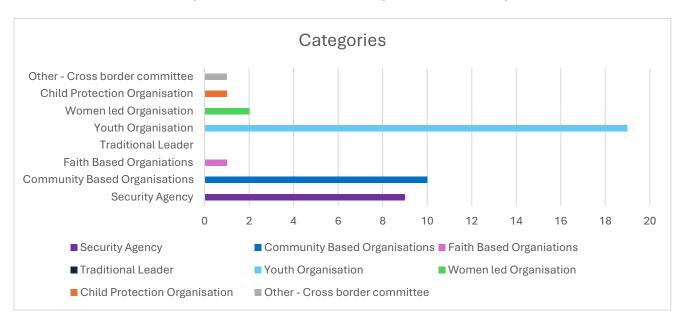
## **Training Demographic**

A total of 43 respondents responded to the feedback forms, with 31 (72%) being male and 12 (28%) female, as depicted in the chart below. 49% were Ethiopian, 42% Kenyan, and 9% chose not to disclose, as described in the chart below.





In terms of the various categories the respondents belonged to, the following were captured.



### **Feedback Evaluation**

A comprehensive Respondent Feedback Assessment was conducted. This was aimed at understanding the participants' experiences, level of satisfaction, and overall perception of the undertaken training workshop. Below are the statistics of the participants' feedback.

	Rating (%) out of 43 respondents					
Question No	Questions	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
5	Overall organisation of the Training	0%	0%	1%	14%	84%
	Rating of the venue and facilities provided	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
6		0%	0%	2%	21%	77%
	Relevance of the content presented	Very Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Neutral	Relevant	Very Relevant
7		0%	0%	0%	23%	77%
8	Rating the effectiveness of sessions	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Objectives and Expected Outcomes		2.3%	0%	2.3%	25.6%	69.8%
Peace and Security Programme of COMESA		2.3%	0%	0%	20.9%	76.7%
An Introduction to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism 101		2.3%	0%	0%	23.3%	74.4%
Youth Peace and Security in P/CVE		2.3%	0%	2.3%	23.3%	72.1%
Gender Sensitive Approaches to P/CVE		2.3%	0%	0%	27.9%	69.8%
Early Warning and Early Response Systems and their relevance to P/CVE		2.3%	0%	0%	9.3%	88.4%
Essential Principles of Good Governance		2.3%	0%	0%	14%	83.7%
Inclusive Measures in Addressing P/CVE		2.3%	0%	2.3%	32.6%	62.8%
Cross-Country Collaboration in CVE		0%	0%	2.3%	32.6%	65.1%
	Rating the level of engagement and interaction	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
9		0%	0%	2%	23%	74%
-	Effectiveness of group work sessions	Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Neutral	Effective	Very Effective
10		0%	0%	2%	23%	74%

In addition to the sessions' feedback were recommendations and other comments aimed at improving the holding of similar future trainings, as well as the lessons learned. These include the following.

Q. No	Question	Most highlighted responses	3	
11.	Key takeaways of the training	Partnership and collaboration are essential to prevent and counter VE	Information sharing is a crucial factor in P/CVE.	The meaningful inclusion of youth as agents of change and peace needs to be amplified.
12.	Additional topics or areas that could be covered in future trainings	Conflict resolution methodologies	Gender, peace, and security training (social inclusion and exclusion)	The role of security personnel in P/CVE

**Review:** The ratings demonstrate the effectiveness of the delivery and process of the undertaken training. However, it is encouraged to enhance the engagement of the delegates more effectively. A challenge encountered was the receptibility of all participants. Not all participants responded to the post training evaluation due to the significant language barrier, especially for the older generation.

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