



Voice Up! Information for Peace in Ethiopia (VIP) project

Outcome Harvesting Report

Ethiopian Institute of Peace (EIP)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Peace in Ethiopia (VIP) project

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Ethiopian Institute of Peace - 2025

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ABBREVIATION

CSOs Civil Society Organizations

EIP..... Ethiopian Institute of Peace

FGD..... Focus Group Discussion

KII..... Key Informant Interview

OH..... Outcome Harvesting

M&E Monitoring and Evaluation

VIP Voice up! Information for Peace in Ethiopia (VIP)

Project

Message from the Executive Director of Ethiopian Institute of Peace (EIP)



The inception of the Ethiopian Institute of Peace/EIP/, the former Peace and Development Center/PDC/ goes back to 1991 G.C where Ethiopia faces a transformational political change. Since then the organization works to prevent conflict and build lasting peace by addressing root causes like poverty, injustice, and inequality, strengthening local capacities for conflict management, fostering social cohesion, promoting human and democratic rights, and facilitating reconciliation in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

EIP envisions Ethiopian and the Horn of Africa to be a place where justice and peace prevail so that the peoples of the region will thrive and prosper focusing their energies on economic development, eradicating poverty, disease, and illiteracy. The institute is also committed to its values: neutrality, human dignity, empathy, model for peace, respect to other's values and honesty.

Ever since its establishment and with the clear and deep understanding of the complex interplay of factors and processes necessary to achieve sustainable peace, EIP has been rigorously implementing projects within Ethiopia and the neighboring countries to prevent violent conflicts and resolve if it happened and create sustainable peace.

Among the many initiatives that EIP has been currently implementing, The Voice up! Information for Peace in Ethiopia (VIP) Project is one to be mentioned. Thanking for the generous financial support of the European Union, the project had been under implementation in the Afar, Amhara, Benishangul Gumuze and Tigray Regional States from March 2024 to October 2025.

The project intervention regions are characterized by violent conflicts which resulted in loss of human life and destructions of properties. The violent conflict was worsened by the spread of fake news, hate speech, misinformation and disinformation through mainstream and social media.

The VIP project was designed with the objective of contributing to sustainable peace, reconciliation, recovery, and social cohesion in Ethiopia, with a specific focus on the above-mentioned regions. It also aimed to address conflict-related challenges, promote gender-sensitive dialogue, rebuild social cohesion, and empower community-driven peacebuilding initiatives.

The project used a strategy of implementing activities through carefully selected Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the four regions. In doing so, EIP has selected eight CSOs based on a predefined robust capacity assessment. Following the selection of eight best fitted CSOs, two from each region, EIP provided a conflict sensitive peace building project designing, implementing, monitoring, evaluation and reporting trainings to enhance their capacities. After EIP evaluated project proposals designed by the CSOs and give approval, Internews provided them small grant to implement the projects where EIP monitored the implementation through rigorous follow-ups and mentoring. The projects contributed a lot in the efforts of countering fake news, hate speech, misinformation and disinformation through community mobilization, using social media and capacity building.

At the end, it was found necessary to harvest the outcomes generated by the implementation of the project. The outcome harvesting exercise reveals the intended and unintended outcomes resulted from the intervention.

This publication presents the process of the outcome harvesting including the methodology utilized and the verified outcomes (intended and unintended) identified. The findings underscore the contribution of the VIP project to the peacebuilding efforts in the

project intervention areas. It also allows CSOs who implemented the projects to see how their interventions contribute to the changes in the complex environments where results are unpredictable.

For this to happen, the contribution of the European Union (EU) is very invaluable and instrumental. And once again I feel honored to pass my heartfelt thanks to the EU. It is my ardent believe that our partnership will continue in the times to come. I am also indebted to Internews International for the good leadership as lead organization and coordinating the overall project implementation which resulted in a smooth implementation within the predefined time frame.

I strongly believe that these monumental achievements could not be materialized without the rigorous efforts of the CSOs that implemented the projects. So, I am so much grateful for your relentless efforts and the achievements. My honest thanks also go to the Afar, Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz and Tigray Regional states Peace and Security Bureaus and other government departments for their all-out support during the implementation of the project. Last but not least, my thanks go to the project target communities of the four project implementation regions that they have accepted the project and fully engaged in the implementation.

Finally, I want to reiterate that violent conflicts are rarely caused by one single factor; often several issues play a role to reinforce and exacerbate each other. This state of fact confirms that the solution for peace needs a concerted effort of many stakeholders. To this end, it is my strong conviction that a strong and sustained synergy among the CSOs, government and community at large should be created to ensure sustainable peace in Ethiopia. This is the task of peacebuilding that we can't afford not to do it.

Thank you

Ayten A. Birhanie (PhD)

Executive Director

1. Introduction and Project Overview

The Voice UP! Information for Peace in Ethiopia project started in March 2024. The context in which this project operates, Afar, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz and Tigray Regional States of Ethiopia, are marked by conflicts and complex challenges. The conflicts have led to mass internal displacement, violence, and a breakdown of social cohesion and trust among communities. The situation has been exacerbated by the spread of disinformation and hate speech through traditional and social media platforms.

It is amidst this gloomy situation where conflicts are rampant, peoples are displaced and a particular high need to amplify the voices of marginalized groups, such as women, youth, traumatized people, and displaced communities were crucial components of this project.. The project aims to contribute to the efforts of addressing these challenges by strengthening the capacities of community based radio stations, social media platforms and CSOs on Conflict Sensitivity and Peace Building Project Design with view of enabling them to engage in conflict-sensitive and gender-inclusive manner.

The project recognizes that community-based radios, social medias and CSOs can play crucial roles in shaping public opinion, fostering dialogue, and mitigating conflicts. However, these entities often lack the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to effectively address the diverse and complex needs of the communities. That is why the project mainly focused on strengthening digital media literacy, encourage responsible media usage, enhance critical thinking and promoting dialogues for peace, mutual understanding, reconciliation and strengthening social cohesions.

The project was funded by the European Union, led by Internews International and implemented by the Ethiopian Institute of Peace/ EIP/, OMNI, Wazema radio and eight CSOs (two from each region) in the Amhara, Tigray, Afar, and Benishangul-Gumuz regions.

2. Goals and Objectives of the Project

The overall goal of the “Voice up! Information for Peace in Ethiopia (VIP)” project was contributing to sustainable peace, reconciliation, recovery, and social cohesion in Ethiopia, with a specific focus on the conflict-affected regions of Tigray, Amhara, Afar, and Benishangul-Gumuz.

Through a comprehensive and targeted approach, the project seeks to achieve the following:

- **Strengthen Inclusive and Gender-Sensitive Dialogue:** The project aims to strengthen inclusive and gender-sensitive dialogue at various levels within Ethiopian society. By working with community-based radio stations, civil society organizations (CSOs), and media outlets, the project facilitated platforms for open discussions that address conflict-related issues, promote understanding, and foster reconciliation. This objective underscores the importance of engaging marginalized groups, including women and youth, in meaningful dialogues that contribute to lasting peace.
- **Rebuild Social Fabric and Promote Social Cohesion:** Another key objective of the project was rebuilding the social fabric that has been frayed by conflicts and divisions. By leveraging the reach of community-based radio stations, the project disseminated accurate and relevant information that promoted unity, understanding, and shared values among different communities. Through peace awareness and education campaigns, the project countered hate speech and disinformation while fostering a sense of belonging and cohesion.
- **Empower Community Radio Stations and CSOs:** The project was committed to enhancing the capacities of community-based radio stations and CSOs to effectively address the information needs of their communities. By providing conflict-sensitive journalism training, technical support, and innovative feedback

mechanisms, the project aimed to equip these entities with the tools and skills necessary to engage in impactful information dissemination and peacebuilding efforts.

- **Promote Mental Health and Gender Equality:** Recognizing the importance of addressing mental health issues exacerbated by conflicts, the project created space for discussions around mental health and trauma healing. Furthermore, it promoted gender equality by amplified the voices of women and addressed gender-based violence through media campaigns and awareness-raising activities.
- **Launch Innovative Peace Campaigns:** The project aspired launching innovative peace campaigns, both at the national and regional levels. Leveraging the power of media, including community radios and social platforms, the campaigns delivered messages of sustainable peace, reconciliation, and recovery. These campaigns aimed challenging existing prejudices, counter hate speech, and promote a culture of tolerance and understanding.
- **Promote Inclusivity and Marginalized Voice:** Through a rights-based and gender-responsive approach, the project prioritized the inclusion of marginalized groups, including trauma victims, survivors of gender-based violence, and displaced communities. By ensuring their active participation and representation, the project sought amplifying their voices, address their unique needs, and promote their role in shaping a peaceful and cohesive society.

3. EIP's Role in the Project Implementation

As one of the major projects implementing partners, EIP was mainly engaged in conducting Organizational Capacity Assessments (OCA) of CSOs in the four project implementation regions and selecting eight, two from each region to implement selected activities of the project in their own respective communities. The Organizations are AS ALE Pastoralist Multi-Sectorial Development Organization (APMDO) and Friendship Support Association (FSA) from Afar Region; Consortium for Networking and Development (COND) and Ghion Peace, Reconciliation and Development Association (GPRDA) from Amhara Region; Benishangul-Gumuz Development Associations Network (BGDNA) and Zumbara Youth Vision Development (ZYVDA) from Benishangul Gumuz Region and Alliance of civil Society Organizations of Tigray (ACSOT) and Chura Abugida Artistic Association (CAAA) from Tigray Region.

In doing so, EIP prepared a capacity Assessment Tool, conducted the assessment and selected eight best fit CSOs. Following the selection, EIP provided a training on “conflict sensitive peace building project design” to the eight CSO who are the prime movers for the outstanding outcomes achieved. After the training, the eight CSOs were tasked to design a conflict prevention and peace building project for a small grant. In this regard, EIP evaluated the eight proposal to meet the expected project design standard and its conflict sensitivity and provide the necessary feedback for improvement. Once all the project approved, EIP conducted a continues monitoring and mentoring throughout the implementation process. EIP also provided a training on Trauma Sensitive Journalism to various journalists of social and main stream medias. This Outcome Harvesting Publication is EIP's final engagement in the project implementation.

4. Outcome Harvesting (OH) Objectives, Process and Methodology

Outcome in this context is a change/changes in the behavior, relationships, actions, activities, policies, or practices of an individual, group, community, organization, or institution. Outcome Harvest is, therefore, the identification, formulation, analysis, and interpretation of outcomes to answer useable questions.

This OH was the final exercise for this project. It was done because of its ability to capture the complex expected and unexpected results in dynamic project implementation settings. Unlike traditional methods that measure progress against pre-determined indicators, the OH identifies, verifies, and makes sense of outcomes changes in behavior, relationships, actions, and policies influenced by the project

4.1. Objectives of the Outcome Harvesting

4.1.1. General Objective

To identify, describe, and verify the intended and unintended changes (outcomes) that have occurred as a result of an intervention, and to determine how and to what extent the intervention contributed to those changes.

4.1.2. Specific Objective

The specific objectives of conducting the outcome harvesting was to capture and document key changes resulting from the project interventions; to analyze and verify the project's contribution; and to generate knowledge and experiences to guide future programming and decision making.

4.2. The Process of Outcome Harvesting

The whole process of OH started from developing the tool and plan. The data gathering work begun with reviewing documents such as project proposals implemented by the CSOs, reports both from the implementing CSOs and monitoring exercise by the EIP M&E team, training materials, social media information and publications produced by the project. This was followed by a field work to collect first-hand information from the project target groups, implementing staffs, local government officials and relevant stakeholders.

The OH process relied on repeated efforts of data collection, analysis and triangulation to ensure that the findings are rigorous and evidenced. This involved collecting data from multiple sources, assessing the strength of the data/evidence and engaging with multiple stakeholders throughout the process. The evaluation followed six steps: developing the Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool, reviewing various documents like project documents, reports, produced posters, etc, collecting data through target community and stakeholder engagement, analyzing the collected data/information, interpret and draft the outcomes, validating the draft outcomes and produce the final report.

After gathering data through the above-mentioned tools, the team analyzed the collected data to determine key outcomes identified as resulting from the project implementation. The OH exercise helped the evaluation teams to identify a set of convincing behavior change, outcomes, for individuals, groups, communities, social media, organizations or institutions.

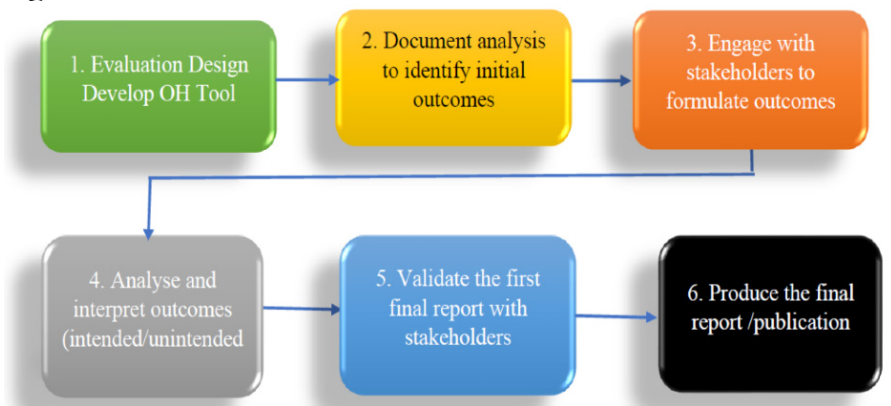


Fig 1: Outcome Harvesting Process

4.3. Outcome Harvesting Methodology

As mentioned above, the EIP OH Team implemented a robust, multi-step process outcome harvesting methodology to validate all project outcomes. In doing so, the team employed a methodology which is particularly suitable for capturing complex changes in behavior, relationships, and practices that emerge as a result of the project peacebuilding interventions. Instead of measuring progress against

predefined indicators, observable changes (outcomes) are identified and documented first, and then worked backward and forward to determine how and why those changes occurred, who contributed to them, and in what context.

4.3.1. Data Collection Methods and Data Sources

A predominantly qualitative approach was used to ensure a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the harvested outcomes. Multiple methods were combined to enhance credibility and triangulation:

- **Document Review:** Extensive review of project documents and reports, training materials, media outputs and monitoring data was undertaken to complement field data and substantiate harvested outcomes.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** KIIs were conducted with project implementing staffs of the CSOs, community leaders, influential media actors, and selected project target community members to provide first-hand insights on the outcomes, the process of change and contributing factors.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** FGDs were organized with diverse groups of beneficiaries, including youth, women, and community representatives, to capture collective perspectives, validate outcomes, and explore how the changes were experienced at the community level. A total of 60 individuals (39 male and 21 female) participated in the FGD sessions.

4.3.2. Analysis, Interpretation and Verification Process

The team analyzed and interpreted the data collected throughout the outcome harvesting process to provide findings against each of the evaluation questions and to generate important lessons and recommendations. The phase-based approach to data collection allowed the EIP OH team to critically analyze and test the findings at the end of each phase.

To ensure reliability and validity of the harvested outcomes, a multi-layered verification process was applied:

- Outcomes were cross-checked through different sources of evidence, including project documents, Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), media outlets
- Triangulation was used to compare information from KIIs, FGDs, and observation notes to confirm consistency.
- Draft outcomes were reviewed with the project implementing CSOs to ensure accuracy, reduce bias, and capture contextual nuances.
- The final outcomes were evaluated by the project implementing CSOs, Internews and EIP evaluation team

4.3.3. Validating Outcomes

The identified outcomes were validated by the project implementing CSOs, Internews International staffs and EIP outcome harvest evaluation team during the outcome harvesting validation workshop held on 24th of October, 2025 at capital hotel in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, . A presentation was made on the identified outcomes and the participants reviewed, validate, and refine the final 15 outcomes.

5. Limitations of the Outcome Harvesting Exercise

Even though the OH methodology and process worked well, there were some challenges.

- It was often hard to tell what changes were directly caused by the project and what was influenced by other factors.
- Discussing sensitive topics like peacebuilding, social cohesion, and misinformation sometimes made participants hesitant to speak freely.

Despite these challenges, using careful methods, checking information from multiple sources, and involving various stakeholders in verifying the outcomes helped make the findings reliable and trustworthy.

6. The Outcome Harvesting

The VIP project team initially identified 19 outcomes (16 intended and 3 unintended) and categorized them into three different groups: by

‘nature of outcome’ ‘by ‘change actors or social actor’ and ‘By ‘type of change’, The outcome harvesting report was validated by the eight project implementing CSOs, Internews staff and EIP OH team on the 24th of October, 2025 at workshop held at capital Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. During the validation of the outcomes 4 outcomes were excluded due to the reason that the results do not show any behavior change of the target groups or shows any subsequent actions or practices and 15 results (12 intended and 3 unintended) are confirmed as outcomes.

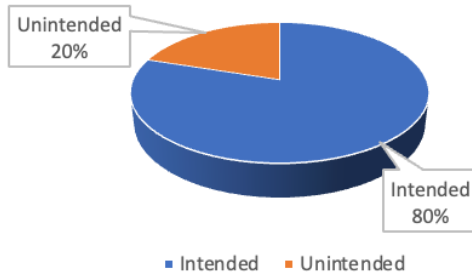
The outcome harvesting team used three different ways to categorize and analyze our outcomes.

- By ‘nature of outcome’, which examines outcomes intended or unintended outcomes.
- By ‘change actors or social actor’, which categorizes outcomes by the group targeted for change. An individual, group, community, organization or institution that changes because of the change agent’s intervention. This includes targe community, youth, media (social and mini media) and CSOs
- By ‘type of change’, which categorizes outcomes according to changes to knowledge/ awareness, attitudes/will or practice/ action.

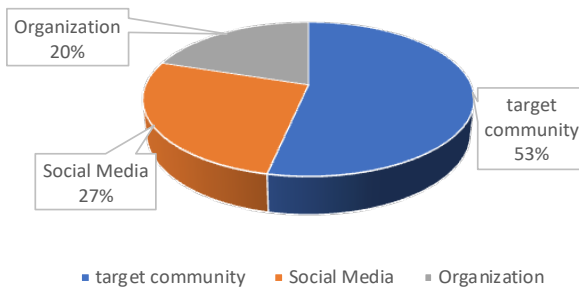
7. Outcomes Category

The outcomes of the project categorized in to three categories by EIP evaluation team: The intended outcomes are those changes that are planned in advance and within the range of the project goal while the unintended outcomes are those changes that are unforeseen or unplanned consequences. To this end, a total of 12 (80%) intended and 3 (20%) unintended outcomes achieved by the project implementation (See Annex I)

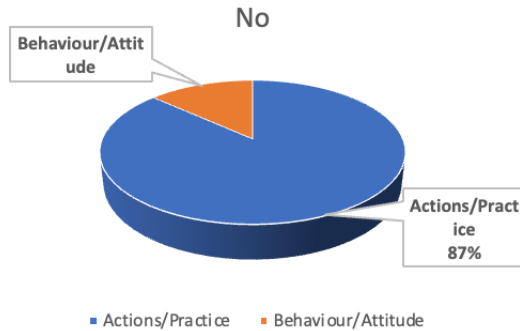
7.1.. Outcomes by Their Nature



7.2. Outcome by Social Actor



7.3. Outcome by Types of Changes



8. Outcome Harvesting Findings

The outcomes harvested are presented as Individual/group Level Outcomes; Organizational-Level Outcomes and Media (Social and mini Media) Level Outcomes.

8.1. Individual/group Level Outcomes

The Outcome Harvesting team gathered individual/group level outcomes that describe a change in behavior/attitude or a change in capacity among individuals of project target areas and other stakeholders in relation to countering fake news, hate speech, disinformation and misinformation, conflict prevention and peace building. The individuals/groups translated their behavior/attitude changes in practice and improved their capacities and act either refraining from disseminating fake news, hate speech, disinformation and misinformation or engage in disseminating verified information that contribute to conflict prevention, promoting peace and peaceful coexistence through social media. The following outcomes show the observable changes of individuals, groups or communities.

8.1.1 A Well-known Social Media Influencer Shifted his Focus to Conflict Prevention, Peace Building, Countering Fake News and Hate Speech

Mr. Henok Dagne, a well-known social media influencer, had been engaged in sharing information on various social issues other than on conflict prevention, peace building, countering fake news and hate speech. However, after participating on a media literacy training, he shifted his focus to countering fake news and hate speech and engaged in disseminating information on peace, social cohesion and tolerance. He also posted messages on the advantages and disadvantages of social media and ways to identify false narratives.



8.1.2 A Youth Leader Applied Responsible Media Practices and Continue to Promote Peace

Belayneh Dagne, a young president of the Amhara Youth Association Bahir Dar Branch and leader of the Bahir Dar Kefta Youth Coalition. He used the social media to disseminate only what he feels good. However, after he got a training on medial literacy, he first organized a peace forum by his own initiative where 120 youth, government officials, opposition party members, communality leaders and elders participated. The forum created space for diverse groups to openly discuss the role of social media to peace building and social cohesions, its challenges, and possible solutions, leading to joint commitments to address misinformation and disinformation. In addition, he continues to work on social media against fake speech and promoting peace and peaceful co-existence.



8.1.3. Transformed from only Sharing of any Social Media Content to Active Engagement in Peacebuilding

One of the big achievements of the project is converting large numbers of youth from fake news disseminator or passive social media observants to activate peace builder or stands against fake news and hate speech. Mr. Shege Tsegaye is one of these youths.

Mr. Shege said, “I have been disseminating any social media content specially from peoples whom I believe respected and known without properly validating the content of the message. However, now thanks to the project that equipped me with the basic skills to critically assess content, identify fake or harmful news, and refrain from circulating it. Now I have transformed my habit from disseminating any social media content as I received to validating them. Moreover, I started to counter any social media contents that I feel dangerous to my community peace and peaceful co-existence”.

Shege also trained 25 young artists to advocated peace and also trained responsible media usage to 105 participants which shows the project’s influence across the community. This outcome is significant because it illustrates a clear behavioral change from passive social media information consumer, fake news and wrong information disseminator to critical thinker and peace advocates.

8.1.4. Project Target Youths Engaged in a Humanitarian Initiative

This is one of the unintended outcomes of the project. A group of project target communities in the Amhara region launched a humanitarian campaign on Facebook and Telegram pages titled “እኛም አለን ለወገን” meaning “We Stand for Our People” after participated in a training on media literacy training focused on core concepts of media and information literacy and societal impact with Fact-Checking Tools.

The campaign was spearheaded by two youths, Solomon Kassa and Gashaw Tilahun, in Aykel town, central Gondar. The two youths utilized Facebook and Telegram to mobilize both Qimant and Amhara community members and among the diaspora.

The campaign enabled the local community members particular the youth and the diaspora to contribute and coordinate support for the provision of exercise books to students in need. They have also mobilized local youth into volunteers who engaged in a variety of services including collecting money from the diaspora, organizing door-to-door collections of used clothing for redistribution to the poor; preparing and serving meals for the destitute during holidays; and supporting the elderly at home such as washing clothes and cleaning homes.

The profound impact of this initiative extends beyond material aid. In the region experiencing ethnic tensions, they actively engaged in building mutual trust between the Qimant and Amhara communities. All these positive actions are contributing toward unifying the community members and fostering lasting social cohesion.



Raising Money and distribution of purchased educational materials

Youth Volunteers serving foods to the needy

8.1.5. Youths Engaged in Street Theater and Hostages Release

This is another unintended outcome. A new criminal practice of hijacking individuals and asking for ransom became a frequent happening in Aykel town and the vicinity which was not a case before. It was amidst this gloomy situation that the VIP project organized a

capacity building training on Media Literacy and its contribution to conflict prevention and peace building. Inspired by the capacity building trainings, a group of community members led by two youths, Liqawnt Setotaw and Solomon Kassa led the preparation of theater and staged on the street on in Aykel town of Amhara Region which was attended by over 600 people, including local leaders, students, and members of vulnerable groups. The theater was on various community's pressing social issues which particularly focusing on the issue of reconciliation, strengthening interethnic and interreligious relationship, community trust and peaceful co-existence. The theater also focused the new trend of crime which resulted in many individuals become hostages.



The staged theater didn't take time to create an impact on some youths and other community members. Local leaders immediately engaged in hostage release activities and able to release a number hostages in their kebeles through negotiation with the kidnapers. This informally established group continued its activity and construct a church for their community. Mr. Abuhay Chiqlu, a local elder, said "The theater performance and its content revealed my ignorance and our community must be awake now. From that time onward, I clearly recognize my role in my community for reconciliation. I already reconciled youths in conflict in my kebele."

Understanding and appreciating the great contribution of the street theater for fostering social cohesion and inter-ethnic peace, the local government officials recognized the performance in official letter given to Ghion Peace Reconciliation and Development Association (GPRDA), the project implementing CSO.

8.1.6. New Task Force for Conflict Prevention, Peace Building and Social Cohesion Established and Operationalized

Following a peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and Conflict Early Warning and Early Response (CEWER) training given to community members, a task force of 50 members from six kebeles in Oura Woreda established to work on conflict prevention and peace building by the communities.

The task force, composed of women, youth, elders, persons with disabilities, government organs and diverse ethnic groups prepared action plan and engaged in raising community awareness on peace, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence. They also supported the conflict resolution and strengthening stakeholder collaboration toward peace.

Mr. Mussa Abubeker and Mrs. Etewa Abate are the members



Mussa Abubeker

of the established task force. Mr. Mussa said “Reconciliation usually occurred only after conflicts have taken place. However, after we participated in the training, we have prevented many potential conflicts through mediation and reconciliation. We are now continuously working on various activities like gathering information of potential conflicts, engaging elders and religious leaders in the prevention

and addressing issues before they escalate into serious disputes”. Mr. Mussa further said that conflicts over water points, boundaries, and grazing lands have significantly decreased, frequent disputes over gold mining areas in Dabusatinako and Akudtumet woredas have declined following discussions with miners’ associations. In general, tensions have shown decreasing and trust among communities has improved.



Mrs. Etewa Abate

Mrs. Etewa Abate, a member of the task force said on her side that together with other influential women in the area, they have been resolving conflicts in their communities. She thanked the project for boosting the capacity of women in her area which enable them to work for their

community’s peace. Mrs. Etewa said “We are now vigilant and following up conflict causes and incidents and try to address them before escalated and changed into a violent conflict”.

8.1.7. Assosa and Abrahamo Towns Youths Rigorously Working Against Misinformation and Hate Speech and Engaged in Promoting Peace through Social Media and Other Community Platforms

The youths in Assosa and Aberhamo town, Benishangul Gumuz, participated in the Media Literacy training and Community Dialogues. The youth stopped sharing unverified contents and actively working against misinformation and hate speech, and promoting peace through social media and other community platforms. The testimony of the three youths, Rumeysa Taha, Miss Tourism of Benishangul Gumuz, Yordanos Bamilaku and Abduletif Beshir is evidence for the youth’s behavioral change in relation to social media usage.

Rumeysa said “I was using social media simply be my instinct and has not been verifying any contents. However, after participating in the Media Literacy training, I started to realize that I was wrong in using the social media without verifying contents”. She further said “Thanks to the project that it opened my and my friend mind to know the danger of irresponsible social media use and now act responsibly. Currently, she is advocating peace through her TikTok account and even reported a case of character assassination against a well-known community figure and a woreda-level government leader.



Rumeysa Taha



Yordanos Bamilaku

Supporting the idea of Rumeysa, Yordanos Bamilaku a youth leader, also said that she abandoned the habit of unethical sharing of social media contents and now actively engaged in creating awareness about peace, responsible media use, and related issues in her kebele, where she serves as a youth association leader.

Similarly, Abduletif Beshir, an active participant of the training from Aberhamo Woreda, testified that the training changed his behavior on how to engage with social media content. He understands the danger of disinformation and now critically evaluates any social media posts.

8.1.8. Community Owned and Sustained Community Reconciliation at Bigger Scale to End Conflict Between the Afar and Argoba Communities

The Afar communities in Dulessa woreda of the Afar Region and the Argoba community in Argobba special woreda of the Amhara region have been living neighboring each other for age-long. Conflict between the two communities have been a frequent phenomenon which claims many lives, destruct social interaction and affects peaceful co-existence.

The VIP project intervention in the two woredas revitalized and empower community-based local peace structures of kebele and woreda-level. It also established a radio Listening and Discussion Groups (LDGs) composed of respected community figures: Clan Leaders, Elders, Religious Fathers, and representatives from youth and women’s groups. This activity resulted in enhanced capacity of the target groups which enabled them to engage into sustaining the achievements of the project at a larger scale through community mobilization. In doing so, the participants created a joint action plan for a bigger reconciliation and sustainability of peace without external project support.

The assigned “fathers” and Elders of the LDGs held frequent discussions with the two conflicting communities and convinced to pursue traditional reconciliation. This action culminated in a powerful three-day cultural reconciliation event held in Dulessa town in the presence of over 400 individuals, government official of the two woredas, youth, women, religious leaders and clan leaders who came from other adjacent woredas of Zone-3 like Awash Fentale Woreda, Amibara Woreda, Haruka Woreda and from Zone-5 woredas of the Afar Regional State. The event was successfully completed by strong determination to end the age-long conflict. The successful intervention

restored normalcy, security and stability. The deadly clashes ceased and ensured community safety. Social interactions and trust were renewed between the two communities. Market connections were re-established; local economies revitalized; peace returned allowing residents of both woredas to live without fear. This outcome shows not only a change of behavior of the two communities in solving conflicts through dialogue than violence but also showcased the determined action of the two communities for sustainable peace and peaceful coexistence.

Mr. Ena’ami Matte, one of the Afar elders. He said the following. “Creating a joint platform for peace talks matters: I remember that it was after the first joint review meeting facilitated by the project, the community leaders and government officials of the two woredas immediately started working towards the reconciliation process. A persistent and deadly conflict between us (the Afar) and our neighbors (the Argoba) occurred through killing of individuals, looting of cattle and other animals, revenge, road blockages and other means caused tragic loss of life and economic hardship, This gloomy situation have now successfully brought to an end. Thanks to all actors who have been actively participating in the process since this monumental success is the result of the peace building initiative supported by the VIP project”.

8.2. Media (Social and Mini Media) Level Outcomes

Social media serves as a double-edged sword that can both exacerbate conflict or support peace. It can fuel conflict by spreading wrong information, amplifying polarization, and provoking violence. To the contrary, it can support conflict prevention and peacebuilding by strengthening communication, providing early warning information, mobilizing communities for peace, and promoting peaceful interactive dialogue. Following a number of media literacy, media advocacy and peacebuilding trainings given by the project, enormous changes observed with regard to social media’s actions in disseminating validated and fact-based information.

8.2.1. A Telegram Platform Transformed into Responsible Social Media



Berihun Fantahun, President of the Negotiation Charitable Organization, stands as a trusted figure in his community. He was not that much curious about verifying social media contents he received before disseminating. After participating in the media literacy training where he got a practical skills/knowledge on what responsible media is and how to develop verified social media content, he reshaped

his outlook on the essence of media and turned his organization’s Telegram platform, followed by 222 members, into a space for awareness creation. He began sharing carefully crafted content on peace building and social cohesions through his Telegram channel. Through his leadership, he transformed the organization’s telegram channel from a simple information dissemination tool into a platform for clarity and accountability, reaching a wider audience and influencing community perceptions.



The post entitled “Responsible Digital Citizen”



The post entitled “How to identify fake news”

8.2.2. New group Telegram Channel Established and Working for Conflict Prevention and Peace Building



Meseret Tesfahun

Ms. Meseret Tesfahun emerged as a proactive leader of a Telegram group that was established following a media literacy training. This group, made up of 30 motivated individuals, was formed with a shared purpose to address the harmful spread of misinformation that was fueling conflict in the area where they live and beyond. The youth became alert during a time where tensions were rising and violence was threatening to expand from Meqa, a small town in Mettama woreda, to nearby towns, including Gondar and Aykel towns. Recognizing the potential danger of the situation and the urgent response needed, the group mobilized to intervene in a meaningful way. The group members started monitoring social media contents and identified and exposed many false narratives circulated with the intention of creating/aggravating social unrest by fake accounts. The group aggressively engaged in providing accurate information about what was truly happening in the conflict affected areas. Their work helped reduce panic and prevent the further spread of conflict. The local elders and community members recognized the value of the youth's contribution and praised their commitment to truth and social stability. Through this initiative, Meseret and the group demonstrated how media literacy can become a powerful tool in peacebuilding when ethically and effectively utilized.

8.2.3. School Mini Media Serves Beyond the School Communities for Preventing Conflicts, Promoting Peace, Social Cohesion, and Peaceful Coexistence

A school mini-media at Oura Woreda High School has been one of the trusted information dissemination platforms to the school communities and the communities around the school. The VIP project provided a training on peacebuilding conflict resolution mechanisms, conflict early warning systems and traditional conflict resolution mechanism. After the training, the mini-media's activity widened by including

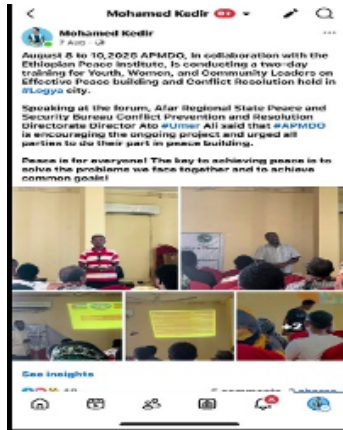
new programs about peacebuilding, conflict resolution mechanisms, conflict early warning systems, and traditional conflict resolution mechanism. The media prepared action plans and a bylaw for better operation. The mini-media clubs also registered new 60 members. A campfire program organized for the school community where poems and short plays presented in the Benishangul language about peace, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence which increased the awareness of the participants. Mrs. Halima Mohammed, the school's Ethics teacher, noted that the clubs have grown by adding over 60 new student members, who now actively engaged resolve conflicts in their classes before they escalate into serious disputes.

8.2.4. Youth-led Social Media Action Stands

Against Misinformation/ Disinformation

Following their participation on media advocacy and peacebuilding training sessions, several youth leaders and social media influencers initiated strong actions to counter misinformation/disinformation and promote fact-based dialogue on current issues within the Afar Region. These individuals used their personal TikTok and Facebook group platforms to clarify false information, encourage responsible media engagement, and discourage hate speech and divisive narratives. Their interventions significantly contributed to reducing confusion and tension among communities in Semera and its neighboring towns.

Mohammed Kider, a well-known TikToker with 17,900 followers under the username @Afar_times, emerged as a prominent advocate for peace following the training. He consistently produces videos warning against conflict and emphasizing dialogue. "I advise those who plan to fight that nothing good comes from war. So, please reconsider your decision", he said. Mohammed frequently exposes fake accounts spreading harmful content and uses fact-checking tools learned from the training to verify posts before sharing.



The training given by the project posted on his social media



Halina Ali

Halina Ali, said “Before the training, I used to respond aggressively whenever members of the Afar community were attacked. Now I speak calmly, focusing on mediation and peace,” she shared. Her shift in tone and action not only earned her more followers but also positioned her as a peace influencer.

Ahmed Mohammed, founder of the youth Facebook group called “Embada (ገቁ)” with 18,000 followers and a personal TikTok with 45,000 followers, emphasized how the training changed his group’s practices: “We learned to verify facts, check postdates, and identify AI-generated content. These actions reduced fake news and misinformation among youth”, he said. The group later established clear regulations to promote peaceful online behavior and inclusivity across ethnic and religious lines.

8.3. Organizational-Level Outcomes

8.3.1. A Media Award Organization Introduced New Category to Recognize Actors Who Promote Peace and Social Cohesion

The Tana Award organization is known for honoring media actors across diverse themes within the Amhara Region. After the staff members of the organization participated on media literacy training, they decided to include a new award category for the promotion of peace and social cohesion. Tigist Mekonnen, a member of the media award organizing team, initiated an institutional shift by deciding to introduce a new award category that recognizes media actors promoting peace, social cohesion and proper utilization of media.

8.3.2. Project Implementing CSO Expands Its Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Initiative to a Bigger Scale

Chura Abugida Artistic Association (CAAA) is one of the eight VIP project implementing CSOs. Inspired by the training on conflict sensitive project design and the results achieved by the project implemented by itself, decided to expand its conflict prevention and peace building project implementation at a larger scale. In doing so, the organization designed new project and started implementing the project in 36 woredas of Tigray Regional State. This is practical outcome of the VIP project in enhancing the project designing capacity and making the CSO to focus on conflict prevention and peace building a larger scale than before. This demonstrates institutional growth and the ability of local organizations to scale up interventions and sustain peace building efforts.

8.3.3. A Local Civil Society Organization Independently Designed a Project to Counter Fake News and Secured Funding To Implement It.

The Admas Youth Holistic Engagement Association, a local civil society organization, showed strong uptake of the media literacy and conflict-sensitive media training by independently designing a new project to counter fake news. In doing so, the CSO designed a project

by itself and successfully mobilizing funding from other source to implement. This outcome is significant because it demonstrates local ownership, initiative, and sustainability, with the organization moving beyond being a training participant to becoming an active driver of community-based solutions against misinformation. The project contribution lies in equipping Admas with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to transform learning into concrete action, thereby extending the reach and long-term impact of the project beyond its original scope.

9. Recommendations

- **Enhance Coordination Mechanisms:** A well function coordination mechanisms among the local communities, CSOs, government organization and stakeholders must be in place to augment the already started efforts of conflict prevention and peace building initiatives and to sustain the results achieved.
- **Expand Communication Channels:** Communication among communities and with government and relevant stakeholders are important to ensure the participation all in the conflict prevention and peace building efforts. To this end, providing effective communication mechanisms is vital to maintain information accuracy. More work in this area could bridge remaining information gaps and ensure hard-to-reach communities receive accurate information.
- **Building Capacity:** It is important to continue providing trainings to individuals, community members and stakeholders on media literacy, conflict sensitivity, peace building and other relevant topics to ensure widespread adoption of community-based dialogue as a means of conveying messages, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of overall public communication.
- **Expand Opportunities:** Expand opportunities for effective peace building efforts by engaging more stakeholders from different walks of life to express their feelings so that peace building will be reinforced by a concerted effort of the people at large.

EIP's Mission, Vision and Values

Mission: EIP advocates a culture of Peace through proactive grassroots participation by fostering customary and modern conflict resolution mechanisms in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

Vision: EIP envisions a Horn of Africa where justice and peace prevail so that the peoples of the region will thrive and prosper, focusing their energies on economic development, eradicating totally poverty, disease, and illiteracy.

Values:

Neutrality: EIP doesn't endorse, promote or oppose political parties, political entities, candidates, and forums or platforms or/and religious ideologies. All are respected regardless of their status.

Human Dignity: EIP values human dignity, and believes the affirmation and upholding of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of human beings are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. It respects and follows the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Empathy: EIP believes in the importance of fostering understanding and sharing of another person's feelings, needs, concerns and emotional state.

Model for Peace: EIP is committed to peace-building, mediation, conflict prevention and resolution, peace education, education for non-violence, acceptance of others even beyond tolerance, mutual respect, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and reconciliation.

Respect of Others' Values: EIP respects and appreciate the values, beliefs, cultures and history of others.

Honesty: EIP strives to be sincere, truthful, trustworthy, honorable, fair, genuine and loyal with integrity.



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