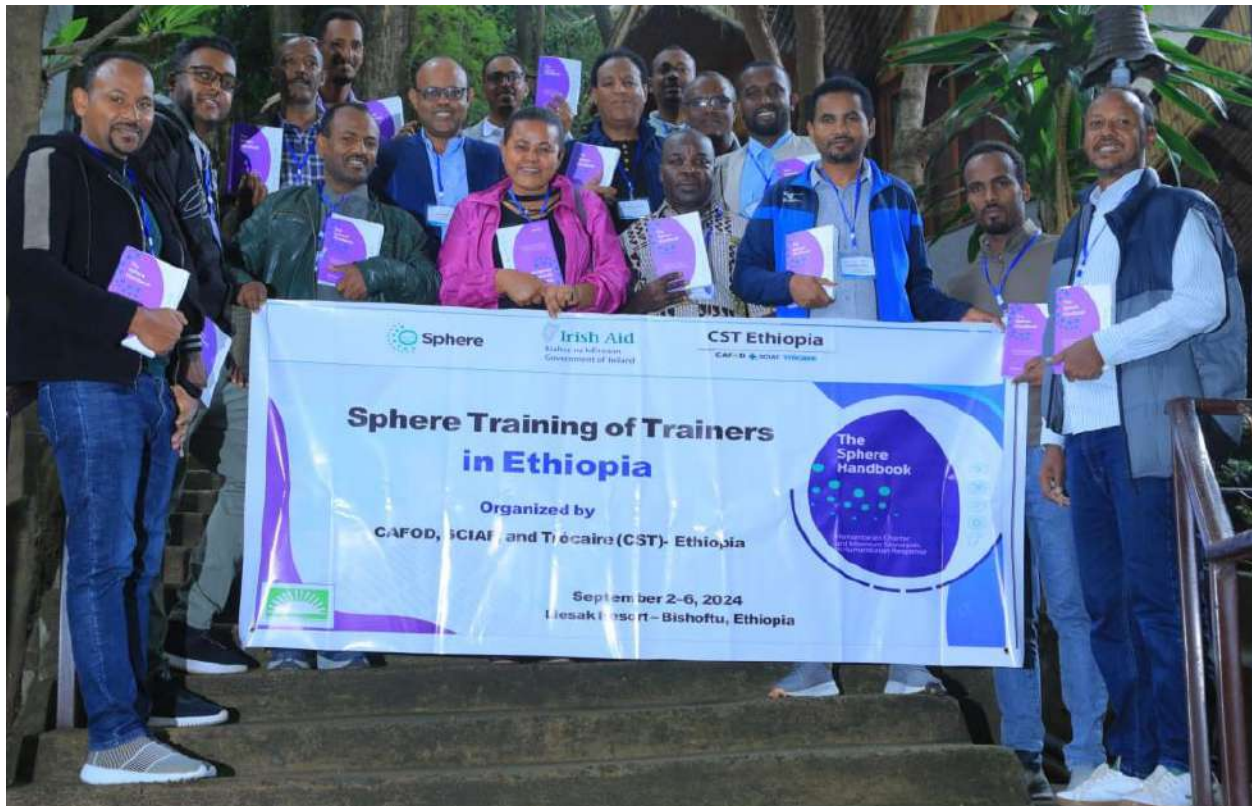




CST Ethiopia

Supported by **CAFOD** **SCIAF** **Trócaire**

Sphere Training of Trainers (ToT) Bishoftu, Ethiopia, September 02 - 06, 2024



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Acronyms and Abbreviations	V
1. Background.....	1
2. ToT Learning Objectives	2
3. Selection of Participants	2
4. Facilitators.....	3
5. Planned and Delivered Events	3
6. Pre-ToT: Planning and Preparation	4
6.1 Coordination Meetings and Management Team.....	5
6.2 Welcome Webinar	5
6.3 Agenda	6
7. Approach and Methodology	7
8. Proceedings	8
8.1 Day 1	8
Session 1: Introduction to Sphere and the ToT.....	8
Session 2: Navigating Sphere handbook, Foundation Chapters and STPs.....	12
Session 3: Navigating Sphere Technical Chapters and STPs	14
Session 4: Sphere in Practice	15
Session 5: Preparation and Orientation to PL Mini Session.....	16
8.2 Day 2.....	17
Session 1: Adult Learning Principles.....	18
Session 2: Designing Sphere Learning Event.....	19
Session 3: Assessment of Learning Needs.....	20
Session 4: Mini Session (5 Minutes Preparation and Presentation)	21
Session 5: Mini Session (5 Minutes presentation and reflection).....	21
8.3 Day 3.....	22
Session 1: Adult Learning Clinics	22
Session 2: Becoming Effective Trainer (qualities, roles, and facilitation skills).....	24
Session 3: Giving and Receiving Feedback.....	24
Session 4: Preparation for Maxi session (session planning).....	26
Session 5 -6: Presentation for Maxi session	27
8.4 Day 4.....	28

Session 1 to 5: Participants-led Presentation (45 minutes) - continuation.....	28
8.5 DAY 5.....	29
Session 1: Learning Review.....	29
Session 2: Sphere Activity Cards.....	30
Session 3: Welcome to Sphere Community.....	31
Session 4: Individual Action Planning.....	32
Session 5: Collective Plans and Next Steps.....	32
Session 6: Closing and Certificate Distribution.....	33
9. Training Quality Control Measures	34
10. Sphere ToT Evaluation	35
11. Lessons and Recommendations	39
Appendices.....	41
Appendix 1: Final Sphere ToT Agenda.....	41
Appendix 2: Sphere ToT Participant Selection Process and Criteria	41
Appendix 3: List of Sphere ToT Participants	42
Appendix 4: Trainers and Company Profile	43
Appendix 5: Sample Pre-ToT Certificate	44
Appendix 6: Revisiting Sphere Matching Exercise	44
Appendix 7. Photo gallery	45

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Sphere Handbook 2018 edition.....	2
Figure 2 : Humanitarian experience & engagement exercise	8
Figure 3: Expectations of participants	10
Figure 4: Participants filling blank spaces	11
Figure 5: Qualities of effective facilitators	12
Figure 6: CHS 2014 and 2024 booklets	13
Figure 7: Companion standards	13
Figure 8: Technical chapters	14
Figure 9 : Navigating technical chapters exercise for urgent actions	15
Figure 10 : Daily evaluation (Day one)	17
Figure 11: Adult learning principles (Kolb and Malcolm)	18
Figure 12: Learning style types.....	19
Figure 13: Session plan	20
Figure 14: VARC model.....	23
Figure 15: List of potential challenging behaviour.....	23
Figure 16: Johari Window theory	26
Figure 17: Daily evaluation reflection	27
Figure 18: Sphere activity card exercise.....	30
Figure 19: The virtual “Welcome to the Sphere community” session.....	32
Figure 20: Certificate presentation at Sphere ToT closing ceremony	33
Figure 21: Participants' response to training relevance and effectiveness	35
Figure 22: Participants evaluation organization and logistics	36
Figure 23: Participants evaluation of training team competencies	37

List of Tables

Table 1 : Planned and Delivered Events	3
Table 2 : PLS mini session.....	16
Table 3 : Maxi PLS group arrangement.....	22

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
ADCS	Adigrat Diocese Catholic Secretariat
Caritas	Charity international
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CST	CAFOD, SCIAF and TRÓCAIRE
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
FSN	Food Security and Nutrition
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HSP	Humanitarian Standards Partnership
HUNDEE	HUNDEE Oromo grass root initiative
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
GBV	Gender-based Violence
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
PLS	Participant led session
SCIAF	Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund
SMART	Specific Measurable Attainable realist time bounded
STPs	Sphere Training Packages
ToT	Training of Trainers
VARK	Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, Anesthetic
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

1. Background

CST Ethiopia represents the overseas development and humanitarian agencies of the Catholic Church from England and Wales (CAFOD), Scotland (SCIAF), and Ireland (Trócaire) operating in Ethiopia. These three agencies, each with over 40 years of experience in international development and humanitarian interventions, are members of global networks, including Caritas Internationalis. Currently, they jointly operate a single, integrated country program in Ethiopia under the legal entity "CST Ethiopia." As a partnership organization, CST Ethiopia works with local partners to deliver services to those in need, focusing on humanitarian response, women's empowerment, protection, livelihood enhancement, and community resilience building.

Both Trócaire and CAFOD have been active in Ethiopia for over 40 years. Since 2009, they have collaborated under the CST Ethiopia banner, alongside SCIAF and other Caritas sister agencies. CST's operations span multiple regions in Ethiopia, including the Borena Zone (Oromia Region), South Omo Zone (SNNPR), Addis Ababa, Zone 2 (Afar Region), and the entire Tigray Region. In 2023, CST/Trócaire conducted a comprehensive capacity assessment of local partners to identify relevant gaps, which highlighted the need for targeted training. As a result, Sphere training was provided to staff from both CST and its partner organizations who are directly involved in project design, implementation, technical support, and monitoring and evaluation. Building on this foundation, CST organized a Sphere Training of Trainers (ToT) course in 2024 for core staff and local partner organizations.

This ToT aims to empower participants to lead future capacity-building initiatives at both individual and organizational levels. As localization is an emerging global initiative, the training will enable participants to ensure quality and accountability in humanitarian response among partner organizations, further contributing to CST's global commitments to accountability.

This report includes an introduction, the objectives of the Sphere ToT, preparation and organization, ToT details and methodology, and recommendations for future Sphere ToTs. The agenda, participant list, and training evaluation are attached as annexes.

2. ToT Learning Objectives

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- state the key principles of adult learning, applying them to the design and facilitation of Sphere training events.
- define relevant Sphere content, write detailed session plans, and develop a comprehensive training schedule for Sphere workshops.
- demonstrate proficiency in a variety of training and facilitation techniques tailored to Sphere standards.
- prepare and plan for the implementation of a Sphere learning event within their organization or in the field.
- apply the Sphere minimum standards and indicators in the design, implementation, and evaluation of humanitarian and recovery programs.



Figure 1: The Sphere Handbook 2018 edition

3. Selection of Participants

The goal was to engage 14 participants who had previously attended basic Sphere trainings in December 2023 in Mekele and Arbaminch, as well as those who had completed three online training courses available [here](#). The participants were selected from CST, CST partner organizations, and one from a regional office in Africa (Caritas Africa). The selection process followed agreed-upon criteria, communicated to their respective organizations, which included the following requirements: participants must have been working in the humanitarian sector for at least five years, completed basic Sphere training, and possess significant experience in the field.

Additionally, participants held specific responsibilities related to quality and accountability, humanitarian response, prevention, mitigation and preparedness, recovery efforts, and coordination for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). They also demonstrated the ability to apply, share, and cascade Sphere training in future efforts.

The organizations represented by the participants included:

- CST (4)
- Action for Integrated Sustainable Development Association (AISDA) (1)
- Association of Pastoralist Community for Change (APCfC) (1)
- Community Initiative Facilitations and Assistance (CIFA) (1)
- Ethiopian Catholic Church Social and Development Commission Branch Office of Soddo (ECC-SDCO Soddo) (1)
- DOC Tigray (1)

- ADCS-Adigrat (1)
- Ethiopian Catholic Church Social and Development Commission Branch Office of Mekelle (ECC-SDCO AdB Mekelle Sub-Branch) (1)
- HUNDEE Oromo Grassroots Initiative (1)
- Caritas Africa (1)
- Two facilitators.

Out of the 14 participants, 13 were male and 1 was female. The full list of participants and their organizations is provided in [Appendix 3](#).

4. Facilitators

Representing SEGEL Research and Training PLC, [Dr. Amha Ermias](#) took the lead in managing and overseeing the entire Sphere ToT program. As a Sphere-accredited trainer and CEO of SEGEL Research and Training PLC, Dr. Amha was responsible for planning, designing, and facilitating all training sessions, ensuring smooth delivery throughout the program. He was supported by co-facilitator [Ayenew Bekele](#), a recent Sphere ToT graduate and the Sphere focal point for Ethiopia, who provided valuable assistance.

For more details on the background of [Dr. Amha Ermias](#) and SEGEL Research and Training PLC, please refer to [Appendix 4](#).

5. Planned and Delivered Events

The Sphere ToT was a key component of CST's training initiative and capacity strengthening program for its local implementing partners, aligned with CST's commitment to the localization agenda. This comprehensive training effort featured two main events: a pre-Sphere ToT webinar held on August 27th, 2024, and the in-person Sphere ToT, conducted in December 2023. These events were designed to equip participants with advanced knowledge of Sphere standards and enhance their capacity to cascade training within their organizations.

Table 1 : Planned and delivered Events

Event name	Time	Location and Venue
Sphere Pre- ToT online webinar	Aug 27, 2024	Online
Sphere ToT	Sep 2-6, 2024	Liesak Resort, Bishoftu in Ethiopia

The five-day Sphere ToT took place from the 2nd to the 6th of September 2024, at Liesak Resort in Bishoftu (Debre Zeit), located 40 kilometers from Addis Ababa. The venue provided an environment conducive to focused learning, with well-organized and fully equipped facilities, including flip charts, whiteboards, and audio-visual equipment to support a range of ToT activities.

Fully catered meals and accommodation allowed participants to remain on-site and focus on the sessions without distractions.

Although the resort generally met the requirements for the ToT, some participants expressed concerns about the size of the training room and poor lighting, which slightly affected comfort during sessions. These issues were addressed by conducting some activities outdoors, utilizing the resort's open spaces. This approach, combined with the available amenities, ensured that the ToT proceeded effectively and maintained participant engagement despite minor challenges.

6. Pre-ToT: Planning and Preparation

The planning and preparation for the Sphere Training of Trainers (ToT) began approximately three months before the event, which took place from the 2nd to the 6th of September 2024. The process involved identifying potential Sphere facilitators and establishing communication with the Sphere Secretariat at the Geneva office. Official advice was sought from the Sphere ToT Facilitator, [Amha Ermias](#) (Ph.D.), and the Sphere focal point in Ethiopia, [Ayenew Bekele](#), as referred by the Sphere Geneva Head of Learning and Events, [Felicity Fallon](#), to ensure proper guidance in organizing the ToT. Following the section of Lead Trainer, the lead trainer prepared and shared with CST Ethiopia a comprehensive Pre-Sphere TOT Organization and Plan Guide.

Basically, the Pre-Sphere ToT Organization and Plan Guide outlines essential steps for a successful ToT event. Summary of the outline is indicated below:

Approximately three months prior, organizers should identify potential Sphere facilitators and communicate with the Sphere Secretariat for guidance. Participant selection should be based on relevant criteria, followed by securing a well-equipped venue with necessary amenities. Regular meetings among facilitators and ToT course administrators (organizers) will facilitate coordination, clarify roles, and ensure effective communication. Relevant reading materials and online courses should be distributed to participants, with completion certificates tracked for required courses. Clearly defined roles for team members, including course administrators (organizers), will support participants throughout the ToT. A monitoring system should be established for ongoing support, and a final review meeting should confirm logistics and prepare for any potential challenges, ensuring a smooth Sphere ToT experience.

The organizer, CST Ethiopia, selected participants, secured a venue, and scheduled the ToT at an optimal time. In advance of the event, facilitators provided relevant reading materials and online courses to help participants prepare for the ToT. Candidates were asked to complete and submit certificates for the following free online courses: : [How to Use the Sphere Handbook](#), [How to Be a Sphere Champion](#) and [Training of Trainers](#). Of the 14 participants, 9 completed and submitted their certificates. This thorough preparation contributed to the overall success of the Sphere ToT.

6.1 Coordination Meetings and Management Team

The lead facilitator and the organizing team from CST engaged in frequent email communications and physical meetings to ensure the effective and smooth execution of the Sphere ToT and the overall training program. A series of meetings and phone contacts were held in preparation for the ToT, including:

- Meetings and discussions between the Lead Trainer and course administrators.
- Meetings and discussions among facilitators regarding the content of the ToT.
- Meetings and discussions between CST and the trainer on roles and responsibilities.
- Email communications between the Lead Trainer and the Sphere Secretariat.
- Email and phone communications between the lead trainer and co-facilitator to clarify the division of roles and responsibilities.

These meetings facilitated a clear division of roles and responsibilities and clarified expectations among all individuals involved in the Sphere ToT. CST was represented by two course administrators (organizers): Mr. [Guled Ismail](#), Humanitarian Program Advisor, and [Mrs. Askale Aderaw](#), Livelihood Programme Officer. Their roles included representing CST and ensuring that participants and facilitators received the necessary support and guidance to run a smooth Sphere ToT and overall ToT program.

6.2 Welcome Webinar

The Lead Trainer, [Amha Ermias](#) (Ph.D.), and the co facilitator, [Ayenew Bekele](#), conducted a one-hour virtual welcome webinar to introduce the Sphere ToT. The main objectives of the webinar were to introduce the ToT agenda, clarify participants' expectations, encourage them to complete the required online courses, and establish ground rules. Almost all ToT participants attended the session, which set the tone for the event and assured participants of the support they would receive throughout the ToT process. The webinar helped participants mentally and morally prepare for the training and emphasized the need for their full commitment and dedication.

In addition to the application process, participants were asked to respond to a few questions during the webinar to assess their learning needs. They highlighted their desire for a more interactive Sphere ToT where they could learn to effectively facilitate a Sphere event and gain a deeper understanding of the Sphere Handbook.

Participants were also requested to complete three basic Sphere [online courses](#), as well as an online Training of Trainers (ToT) course. Out of 14 participants, 9 completed the required courses before the in-person ToT. The certificate completion rate was 9 out of 14 (see [Appendix 5](#) for a sample pre-ToT online certificate).

6.3 Agenda

The agenda, attached as Appendix 1, consists of a comprehensive five-day schedule that includes a mix of trainer-led sessions, participant-led sessions, and various interactive learning activities. The training days are structured into blocks, with morning recaps followed by a combination of theoretical sessions, practical exercises, and evaluations. Each day starts with a recap of the previous day's learning and progresses through topics such as adult learning principles, facilitation techniques, and Sphere content navigation (both foundation and technical chapters).

The agenda also includes designated sessions for "Participant Led Maxi Sessions," where participants engage in group-led presentations to enhance their facilitation skills. To promote interactivity, sessions such as group presentations, pair discussions, and Q&A were integrated throughout the day. The agenda was printed on A2 and A3 sheets and visibly posted in the training room for easy participant reference, ensuring a clear understanding of the day's proceedings and learning objectives.

Key agenda highlights:

- **Day 1:** Introduction to the course and revisiting Sphere foundation chapters.
- **Day 2:** Assessing learning needs and designing learning events.
- **Day 3:** Introduction to group presentations and training impact evaluation.
- **Day 4-5:** Participant-led sessions and individual action planning.

Each day concluded with daily evaluations and feedback, fostering continuous improvement throughout the ToT.

7. Approach and Methodology

The Sphere ToT workshop was methodically structured into three interlinked parts, each tailored to the specific objectives of the training. The first part focused on revisiting and deepening participants' understanding of the Sphere philosophy and approach, as well as navigating the [2018 Sphere Handbook](#) (Figure 1). Key concepts such as quality, accountability, dignity, and the right to assistance were emphasized, along with practical exercises to link the technical chapters and familiarize participants with the [Sphere Training Packages \(STPs\)](#) and various formats of the handbook ([HSPApp](#), [Interactive Handbook](#), [Sphere Handbook in PDF](#), and hard copies of the Sphere Handbook 2018 Version). The second part emphasized adult learning principles, addressing how adults learn, learning needs assessments, diverse learning styles, facilitation techniques, feedback, and evaluation. This section also laid the groundwork for designing learning events and session plans, setting the stage for Participant-led Sessions (PLSs). The third part empowered participants to lead sessions, beginning with mini (5-minute) presentations and progressing to maxi (45-minute) sessions.

The ToT was designed to equip participants with the skills and competencies necessary to become Sphere trainers. The training employed participatory methods tailored to diverse adult learning preferences, fostering a collaborative environment with active engagement. Techniques included exercises, case studies, visual aids, videos, group and pair discussions, and participant-led activities. Each day concluded with a wrap-up, feedback session, and recap to review the day's learning, while the following day began by reflecting on participant feedback from the previous session.

8. Proceedings

8.1 Day 1

Session 1: Introduction to Sphere and the ToT

Welcome and Introduction

Immediately before the ToT began, facilitators warmly welcomed each participant and checked whether they had completed the three online courses. They emphasized that this foundational knowledge would enhance discussions and activities. The facilitators also ensured that participants had installed the [HSPapp](#) on their mobile devices, as it would help them navigate the Sphere Handbook and course materials more easily during the training.

Ice breaker: The session began with warm greetings from the course administrators and lead facilitator, followed by an interactive "Humanitarian Timeline" exercise (Figure 2). Participants were invited to introduce themselves and reflect on their humanitarian careers, spanning from 1997 to 2024. Using sticky notes, they shared key milestones such as when they started working in humanitarian aid, their first projects, and their connections to the Sphere Handbook, whether through training, awareness, or practical application. As each participant introduced themselves and presented their journey, a collective visual timeline was created, highlighting the diversity and depth of their experiences while fostering connections based on shared milestones and challenges in humanitarian work.

Participants gathered around the flip chart, where each introduced themselves by sharing their name, position, organization, and years of experience in humanitarian programming. They also discussed their familiarity with the Sphere Handbook, setting the stage for deeper engagement. This was followed by the question, "What trends or patterns do you notice in the timeline from 1997 to 2024?" Participants observed that the use and application of Sphere standards have steadily increased since 1997. The activity served as an effective icebreaker, encouraging participants to engage interactively from the start.

Figure 2 : Humanitarian experience & engagement exercise



The lead trainer then acknowledged the diverse backgrounds of the participants, emphasizing how their varied experiences and perspectives would not only enrich the learning process but also create a dynamic environment for exchanging knowledge. By encouraging participants to draw from their own professional and cultural contexts, the trainer fostered a collaborative atmosphere where everyone could contribute to the collective learning. This diversity allowed for rich discussions and deeper insights throughout the ToT sessions, as participants shared practical examples from their own regions, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of how the Sphere standards can be applied in different humanitarian settings.

Reaffirmation of Ground rules: During the Pre-Sphere ToT webinar, participants collaboratively set and agreed upon the norms and rules governing all sessions. At the start of the ToT, these ground rules were reaffirmed, ensuring clear expectations and promoting a productive learning environment. By reinforcing these guidelines, participants were reminded of the importance of maintaining focus, reducing the risk of distractions, and ensuring that the sessions remained on track. One of the key rules was the use of laptops and mobile phones strictly for Sphere ToT-related activities. Given the highly interactive nature of the Sphere ToT, which includes numerous exercises and discussions, adhering to these rules was essential for participants to stay engaged and meet the session's objectives.

Reasserting Expectations:

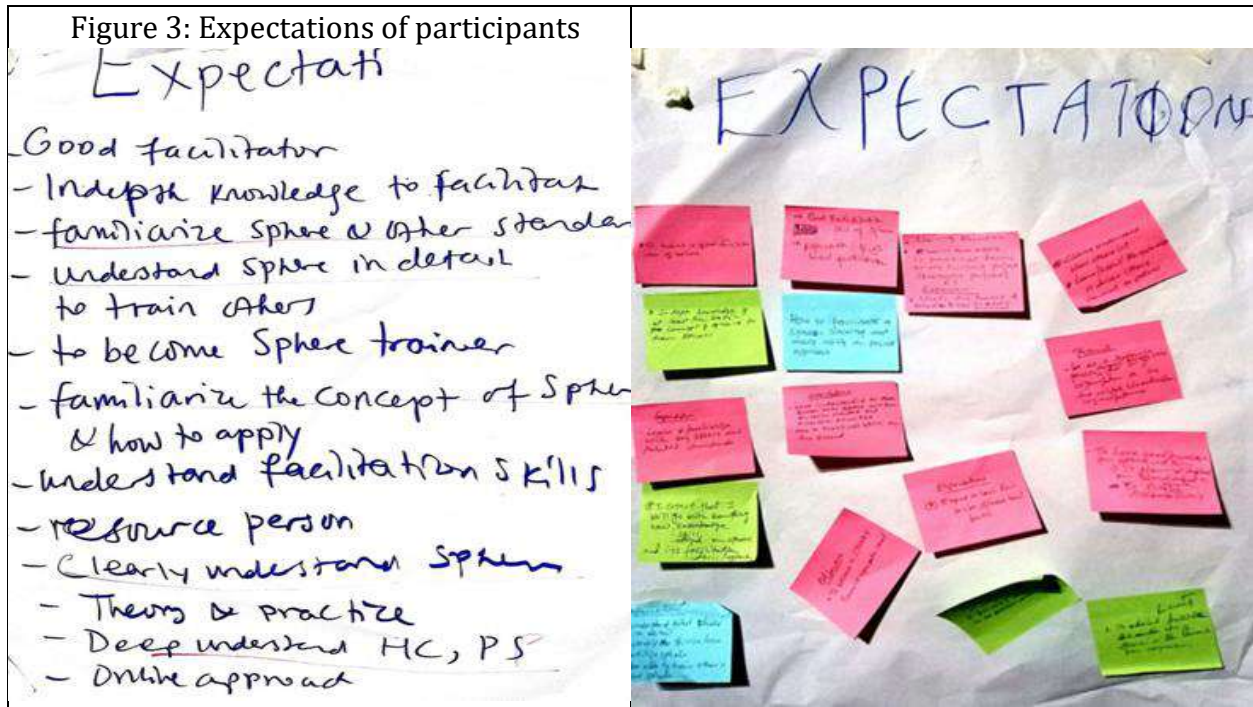
During the Pre-Sphere ToT webinar, participants shared their individual learning objectives and expectations. Taking this input into account, the training team made adjustments to the ToT agenda, incorporating additional activities that were specifically tailored to the participants' experiences and professional backgrounds. To ensure further alignment, participants were asked to reflect on their learning goals during this session. They wrote these goals on post-it notes and placed them on a flip chart, reinforcing the importance of creating a participatory, experience-sharing, and practical learning environment.

Participants expressed a strong desire for a deeper understanding of the Sphere Handbook and its practical application through engaging, hands-on activities. The lead facilitator emphasized this point by referencing the pre-Sphere ToT webinar, where it was made clear that having a basic understanding of Sphere, including completing at least the online courses, was mandatory for participation in the ToT. He clarified that the primary objective of the ToT is to equip participants with the skills to effectively deliver Sphere training.

Additionally, the facilitator noted that the first day of the ToT would focus on understanding the content of the Sphere Handbook and learning how to use it. Throughout the training, hands-on activities and real-world applications would be embedded to enhance practical learning. He also encouraged participants to continue their learning journey by completing further online Sphere

courses and exploring additional Sphere resources, which would help deepen their understanding and improve their approach to Sphere training.

The expectations set by participants were summarized visually in [Error! Reference source not found.](#) below, providing a clear reference point for the group throughout the training.



Sphere ToT Objective and Agenda: The lead trainer reassured participants that the training was specifically designed to address their expectations, needs, and identified gaps while adhering to the quality criteria for a Sphere ToT workshop. The trainer outlined the primary aim and objectives of the training, emphasizing that effective facilitation of Sphere learning events requires two key competencies:

- A comprehensive understanding of Sphere content and practices—this includes knowledge of the basics, foundational principles, technical chapters, and the broader humanitarian context and operations.
- Mastery of adult learning principles and skills—this encompasses designing, facilitating, and evaluating Sphere learning events, as well as key facilitation techniques such as managing group dynamics, giving and receiving feedback, and handling challenging behaviors.

The ToT agenda was structured around four main pillars:

- Revisiting and reinforcing Sphere content, structure, and practices.
- Understanding adult learning principles, conducting needs assessments, developing facilitation skills, and providing/receiving feedback.

- Hands-on practice facilitating Sphere learning workshops.
- Collaborative action planning and determining next steps.

Reviewing Sphere Content and Structure: To refresh participants' knowledge from prior Sphere trainings, they were engaged in several activities designed to gauge their familiarity with the Sphere Handbook.

Revisiting Sphere – Individual Exercise (Quiz): The purpose of this exercise was to refresh participants' memory of the history, key concepts, content, structure, and standards of the Sphere Handbook. Each participant received an envelope containing an activity sheet with 10 objective questions derived from various sections of the Handbook. An envelope with the participant's name and a numbered sheet (1-10) was posted on the wall.

On a separate flipchart, the answer options for these questions were displayed. Participants were tasked with selecting the correct answers from the options on the flipchart and recording them on their individual sheets (Figure 4). Afterward, participants worked in pairs to cross-check each other's responses and discuss any similarities or differences in their answers.

Most participants answered all the questions correctly. The facilitator also allowed time for participants to clarify any questions that were unclear. This exercise encouraged participants to brainstorm and provided an introduction to Sphere before diving deeper into the content.



Figure 4: Participants filling blank spaces

This exercise provided participants with an opportunity to explore the Sphere Handbook using the HSP App, allowing them to answer key questions related to both the foundational and technical chapters. It served as an introductory immersion into Sphere and its 2018 Edition, laying the groundwork for further learning. Additionally, one of the expectations from participants was to internalize the qualities of an effective facilitator, which is essential for the Sphere ToT. Participants engaged in pair discussions, reflecting on the key attributes of an effective facilitator. They highlighted numerous qualities, focusing on approach, style, methodology, critical reasoning, self-reflection, and pair sharing as crucial components of effective facilitation (Error! Reference source not found.).

How to Become Effective Facilitator

- Master of subject matter
- Designing of learning events
- Skills of facilitation & management
- Let them provide feedback
- Supporting the trainees during the training
- Being role model
- Being prepare well, plan & evaluate

Figure 5: Qualities of effective facilitators

Session 2: Navigating Sphere handbook, Foundation Chapters and STPs

Sessions two and three were dedicated to deepening participants' understanding of the Sphere Handbook and navigating the Sphere Training Packages (STPs). The sessions began with a plenary discussion led by the lead trainer, who provided an overview of the various materials available for organizing Sphere training events. These included [the 20 STPs](#), , [Interactive Handbook](#), [Sphere Handbook in PDF](#), [HSPApp](#), hard copies (provided by CST to all participants), and the [Sphere Short Workshop Pack](#).

Participants then engaged in activities designed to help them navigate both the foundational and technical chapters of the handbook. They were encouraged to focus on the learning objectives and key messages from the [STPs](#), tailored to their group activities.

A video was also presented to offer a broader perspective on Sphere's overarching goals, particularly its role in upholding dignity and ensuring accountability. Participants discussed the key takeaways from the video in groups, identifying critical points. The session concluded with an in-depth exploration of the foundational chapter, highlighting the differences between the revised Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and its previous version. Facilitators strongly recommended that participants refer to and use the revised CHS booklet for future reference (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Revised CHS document

Old CHS document



Figure 6: CHS 2014 and 2024 booklets

Companion standards

In addition to Sphere standards, other companion standards (partners organizations) were familiarized to participants to navigate minimum standards for their humanitarian programs (Figure 7). Standards for child protection, inclusion, market, livestock, education, seeds and livelihoods, camp management were amongst visited.

Subsequently, group discussions were carried out to match the companions’ standards with their icons to further understand and digest the companions. Participants can access companions’ standards on HSP app and Interactive handbook.

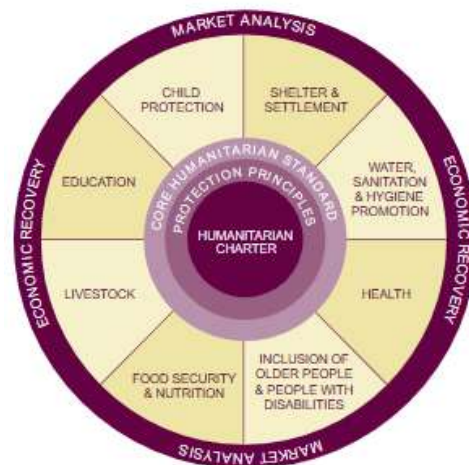


Figure 7: Companion standards

Session 3: Navigating Sphere Technical Chapters and STPs

The session was divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. The first, theoretical segment aimed to refresh participants' understanding of the key concepts in the Sphere technical areas, with a focus on WASH, Food Security and Nutrition, Shelter and Settlements, and Health (Figure 8). Additionally, the session emphasized the interconnection between these chapters during real-world disaster response scenarios.

The technical chapters contain 53 minimum standards, each organized into major categories and specific standards. To prevent confusion between minimum standards and indicators, the facilitator clarified that minimum standards are qualitative, universal, and global in nature, while indicators are quantitative and adaptable to local contexts.

The presentation was highly participatory, engaging participants in discussions that connected Sphere standards to existing practices in WASH, food security, health, and shelter. Participants navigated through the technical chapters, understanding the relationship between minimum standards, key actions, indicators, and guidance notes using Sphere handbooks and the Humanitarian Standards Partnership (HSP) apps

Navigating Technical Chapters: Small Group Exercise (Case Study)

For the practical component, the trainer introduced a flood case study exercise. Participants were divided into four groups, each tasked with focusing on one of the four key technical chapters: WASH, Food Security and Nutrition, Shelter and Settlements, and Health. Their objective was to design a holistic response based on the provided scenario, incorporating guidance for field staff using Sphere standards. A key part of the exercise was to ensure groups coordinated their efforts through the cluster system, promoting a unified and comprehensive response.

After completing their group work, participants presented their key findings and conclusions. This exercise had several important objectives (Figure 9):

- (i) To familiarize participants (future trainers) with Sphere standards more deeply,
- (ii) To encourage participants to apply coordination, collaboration, and participation in a practical context, and
- (iii) To give participants hands-on experience designing a response that integrates Sphere's foundational principles and technical chapters while navigating the Sphere handbook.

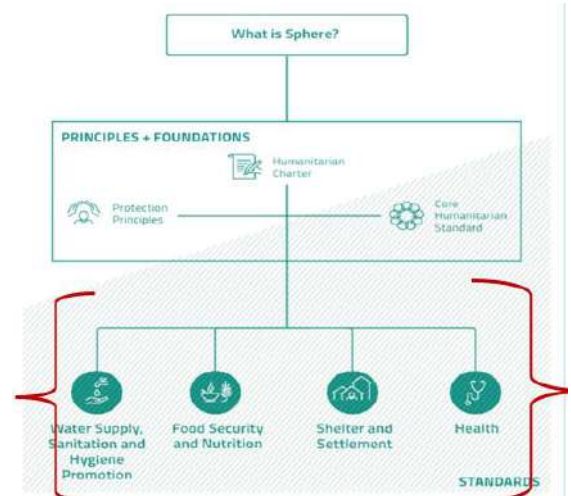


Figure 8: Technical chapters

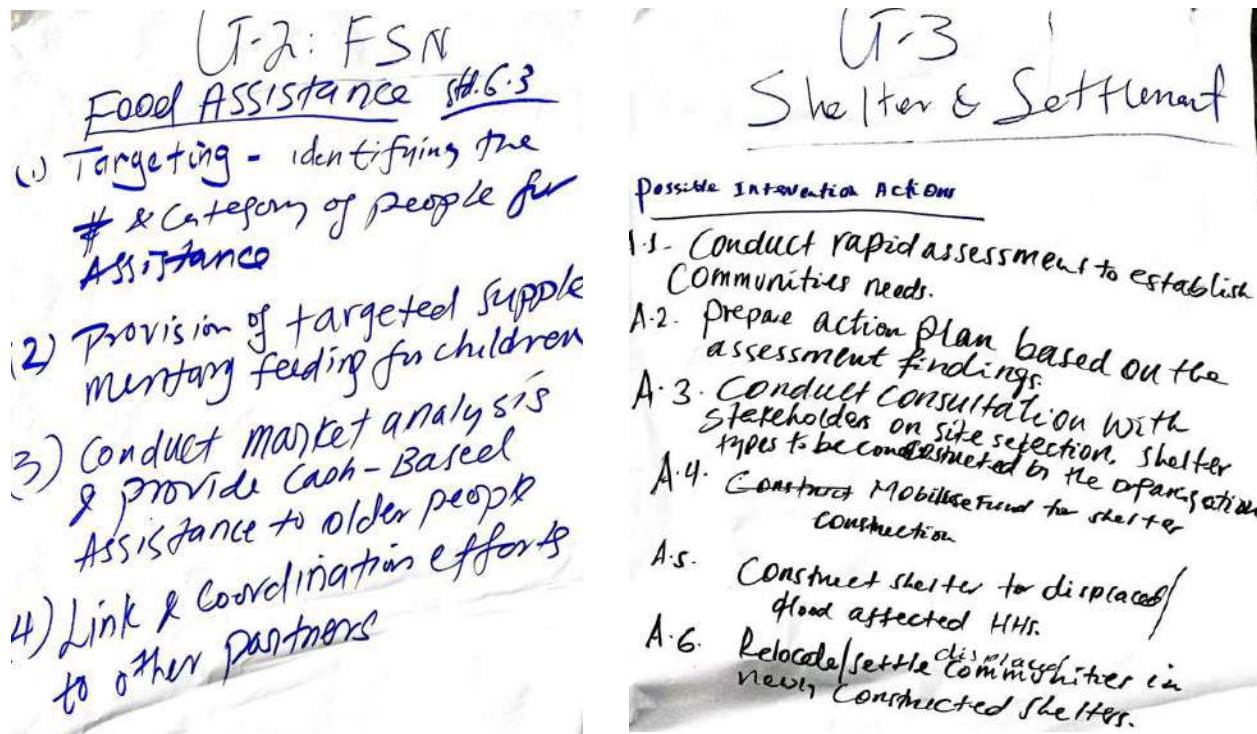


Figure 9 : Navigating technical chapters exercise for urgent actions

Session 4: Sphere in Practice

This session helped participants understand that Sphere standards can be applied in any context, whether rural or urban, in acute or protracted crises, slow-onset or rapid-onset disasters, complex emergencies, and even in safe or hard-to-reach areas. Humanitarian responses occur in diverse settings, where factors like culture, language, responder capacity, security, access, environmental conditions, markets, and resources significantly influence how responses are carried out. Therefore, understanding these operational contexts is crucial for effectively applying the standards.

Participants discussed how factors such as limited resources, political dynamics, access challenges, economic instability, and conflict can make it difficult to meet the standards in many situations. The contextual application of Sphere in Ethiopia and Ukraine was raised, with participants noting that global resource allocation, particularly the global humanitarian focus, poses challenges in meeting minimum standards in different contexts. Despite these challenges, minimum standards remain global, while the associated indicators are adaptable to local contexts.

Additionally, Sphere standards can be utilized throughout every phase of the humanitarian response cycle—from assessment to evaluation. During response efforts, it is essential to consider the capacities and vulnerabilities of different groups, including children, the elderly, survivors,

persons with disabilities, and people living with HIV/AIDS, especially those with protection concerns.

Finally, the session reinforced that Sphere recognizes the primary role and responsibility of the host state in humanitarian response, highlighting the importance of local leadership and accountability.

Session 5: Preparation and Orientation to PL Mini Session

This session offered participants valuable opportunities to delve deeper into the Sphere Training Packages (STPs) and Sphere handbooks, laying the foundation for participant-led session preparations and presentations. Each participant was assigned to present on key Sphere topics through a "mini session" format—brief 5-minute presentations followed by feedback from both their peers and facilitators. The purpose of these mini sessions was to give participants an initial opportunity to present content concisely in front of their peers, helping to build confidence and clarity in delivering Sphere concepts. Adequate time was allocated for participants to prepare their presentations beforehand.

Topics for the Mini Sessions: Facilitators prepared 14 topics for the 5-minute presentations, and the topics were randomly assigned using an online lottery system (www.wheelname.com). The results of the lottery determined which topics each participant would present on (Table 2).

Table 2 : PLS mini session

Participant Name	Topic assigned
Askale Aderaw	Understanding vulnerabilities and capacities
Yonas Moges	Essential concepts of Wash
Wayuma Belay	CHS commitment 5 – Feedback and complaints
Assefa Tesfay	Protection principle 2
Yitbarek G/Sellasia	The Sphere key indicators
Teshome Tsehay	Using Sphere in practice
Assefa Wolde	The structure of Sphere standards
Yosef Endrias	Essential concepts of Shelter and Settlement
Teketel Endrias	CHS commitments 1 – Participation and inclusion
Guled Ismael	Humanitarian Charter
Abdurashid Godana	CHS Commitment 6 – Collaboration and coordination
Abraham Melaku	What is Sphere?
Caster George	Essential Concepts in Health
Hundera Tefere	Essential Concepts in Food Security and Nutrition

The preparation phase provided participants with the opportunity to refer to Sphere materials and organize their thoughts effectively. It allowed them to quickly refer on key concepts, structure their content, and plan how to communicate it clearly and concisely. This is followed by presentation as indicated in [Session 4](#) and [Session 5](#).

Wrap-Up and Daily Evaluation

(Day One):

The day concluded with a participatory revision exercise conducted in a question-and-answer format. Participants were actively involved in reviewing the key points of the day, helping to reinforce their learning. As part of the evaluation process, participants reflected on the day's session by responding to prompts such as “What worked well?” and “What areas could be improved?”

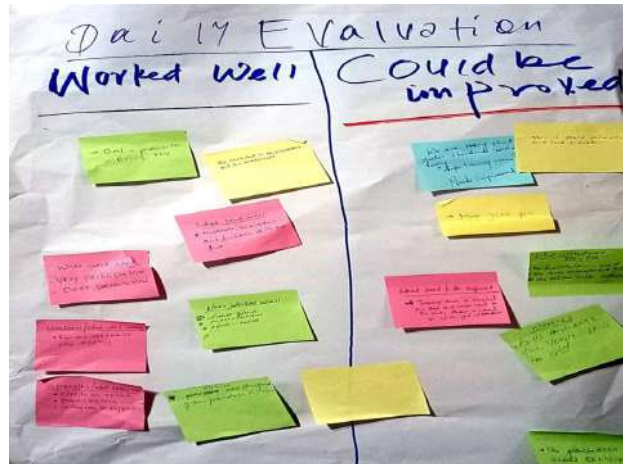


Figure 10 : Daily evaluation (Day one)

Positive feedback emphasized the effectiveness of the group discussions, which participants felt made the session more engaging and interactive. For improvements, participants suggested a change of venue, as the current workshop hall—located near the sea—was too cold and noisy, which impacted both comfort and concentration (Figure 10).

8.2 Day 2

Recap and Review of Feedback: Day two began with a recap of the previous day’s sessions through a group work activity and a 'buzz' exercise. In groups, participants were tasked with identifying the key learning points from day one, based on the sessions that were facilitated. They discussed and reflected on several important areas, including:

- The qualities of an effective facilitator,
- The importance of having strong content knowledge of Sphere,
- Key takeaways from the Sphere foundational and technical chapters,
- How to navigate the Sphere handbook, HSP app, and interactive handbook, as well as other companion resources,
- The practical application of Sphere standards in real-world scenarios.

After these group reflections, the lead trainer and co-facilitator provided a consolidated review, reinforcing the participants' insights and addressing any additional points. This approach ensured a thorough review of the key concepts from day one and set a strong foundation for the sessions ahead.

Session 1: Adult Learning Principles

Enhancing Awareness of Adult Learning Principles: This session aimed to deepen participants' understanding of adult learning principles, various learning styles, and the factors that motivate adult learners. It provided an opportunity for participants to apply these principles to their own learning processes, laying a foundation for designing effective learning events and preparing for participant-led sessions. Activities include the following.

Brainstorming Activity: The session began with a fill-in-the-blank brainstorming exercise: "Adults learn better _____." Participants shared their responses using the interactive platform www.menti.com. Common responses included learning by doing, learning through experience, learning in groups, and learning through practice. Following this, participants engaged in paired discussions to explore the question: "What is the difference between andragogy and pedagogy?" The lead trainer then connected participants' reflections to the core principles of adult learning.

Plenary Session (Q&A, Pair Buzz, and Group Discussions): The session focused on the principles of adult learning, exploring what they are and how they can be applied in Sphere training events. Key concepts covered included Kolb's Learning Cycle stages and Malcolm Knowles' six assumptions about adult learners (Figure 11). The presentation incorporated visuals such as diagrams and pictures to facilitate understanding, followed by group exercises where participants identified crucial elements for effectively facilitating Sphere learning events.

The session concluded with participants actively applying these principles in group discussions, ensuring they understood the relevance of adult learning theories in designing and delivering Sphere sessions.

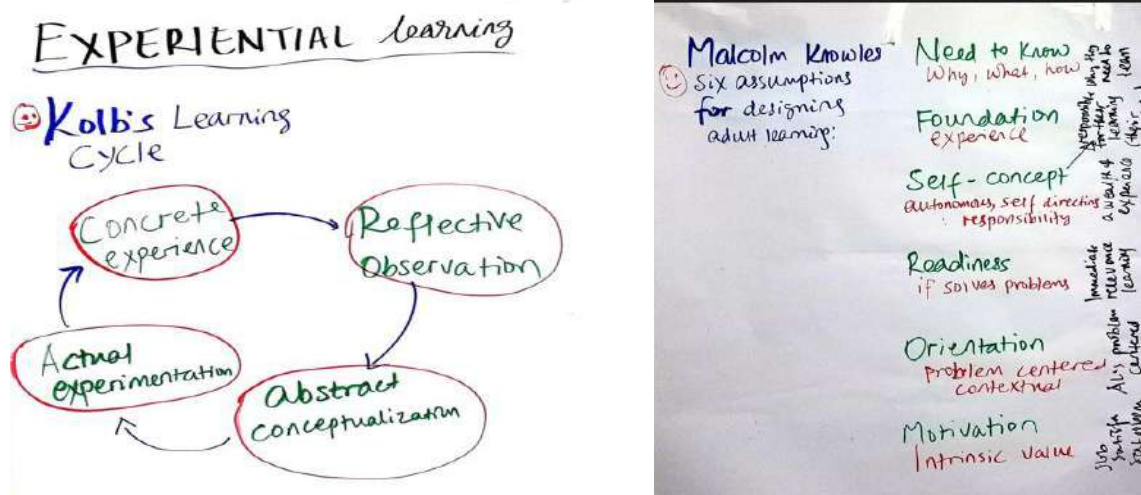


Figure 11: Adult learning principles (Kolb and Malcolm)

Participants focused engaging activities coupled with applying a variety of learning methods were explained as essential to facilitate interactive and successful Sphere learning events or workshops. Further, participants identified the different learning styles that trainees could learn best and the importance of working towards that. The trainer summarized that the adult learning styles and methodologies determine the way we build our knowledge, skill and attitude.

Session 2: Designing Sphere Learning Event

The session started with an overview of a training process, explaining the key steps and how training design should be aligned with learning needs and prior assessments. The session was dedicated to learning by doing: the essential components of a session outline, which included defining the session's aim, objectives, key learning points, and methods and techniques. Participants reflected on it and emphasized the importance of planning in Sphere event design. People prefer different types of learning styles (Figure 12).

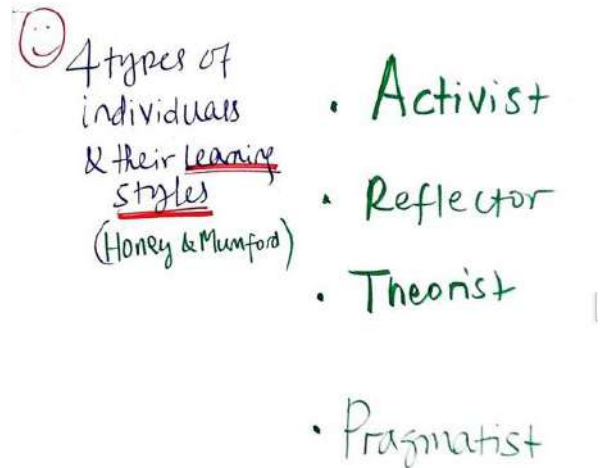


Figure 12: Learning style types

Learning Style Exercise (Case Study): The case study used a relatable scenario—buying a new mobile phone—to explore different learning styles:

- Learning by doing (trial and error) – Activist
- Learning by asking for support or listening to others – Reflector
- Learning by reading the instructions – Theorist

Most participants indicated that they preferred learning by doing, opting to explore the phone through hands-on experience. The session then transitioned into a practical exercise where participants evaluated and defined the session's aim, formulated SMART objectives, identified key learning points, and selected appropriate methods and techniques for delivering the content. Additionally, participants were introduced to Kirkpatrick's four levels of training evaluation (Reaction, Learning, Impact, and Result) to assess the effectiveness of a training program. This provided a comprehensive framework for designing and evaluating learning sessions.

Using a Session Template: Both a session plan template and a sample were distributed to all participants. Participants can access the session plan on each STPs, but they can develop their skill and knowledge to adapt and tailored to their participants (Figure 13). A detailed discussion about objectives, methods, duration, and the required resources for each section followed this. Participants were actively reflected, and this paved the way for use in the participant-led session.

The final take was to remember that training sessions do not just come out of thin air. Failing to plan is planning to fail. Training session outline helps you control yourself and be mentally prepared.

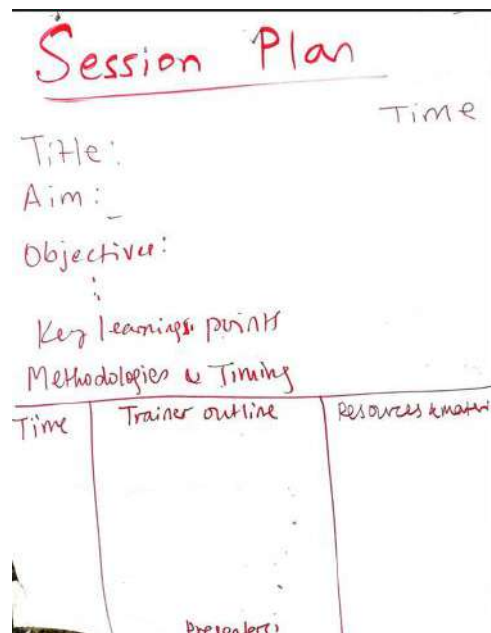


Figure 13: Session plan

PREPARATION IS THE KEY

Session 3: Assessment of Learning Needs

The session began with an individual reflection on the importance of conducting a learning needs assessment. This was followed by a group discussion that delved into specific aspects of learning needs assessment, highlighting its significance in the overall learning process. The facilitator then asked participants to share their experiences of assessing learning needs before conducting any trainings or workshops, including the Sphere.

Participants engaged in pairs and/ trios to explore key considerations when assessing the training needs of individuals related to Sphere training. After these discussions, the co-facilitator introduced various methods for identifying and analyzing learning needs, offering practical tools to enhance the assessment process.

An additional pair discussion focused on several key questions: why participants chose to attend this training, whether it is possible to conduct effective training without a prior needs assessment, and the relationship between learning needs and training plans.

To conclude, the co-facilitator shared personal experiences, emphasizing that thoroughly assessing participants' learning needs not only increases the effectiveness of the training but also ensures that the training meets its intended objectives. This comprehensive approach to learning needs assessment was positioned as essential for successful training outcomes.

Session 4: Mini Session (5 Minutes Preparation and Presentation)

To give participants more opportunities to practice their presentation skills and refine their abilities as trainers, a 5-minute presentation slot was allocated to each participant. This exercise allowed them to present on a specific topic that was assigned via a lottery system on day 1. The use of the lottery method ensured that participants were randomly assigned topics, giving them the chance to customize their presentations to the specific needs of the training while working within a limited timeframe.

This practice not only allowed participants to explore the Sphere materials in-depth, focusing on their assigned topics, but also helped them enhance their confidence and effectiveness as trainers. The exercise provided valuable hands-on experience, ensuring that participants had the opportunity to apply what they learned in a practical, supportive environment. This approach aimed to support and improve their abilities throughout the learning process.

Session 5: Mini Session (5 Minutes presentation and reflection)

Building on the preparation from Day 1 - **Session 5: Preparation and Orientation to PL Mini Session**, this session continued with each participant delivering a 5-minute presentation, followed by feedback. After each presentation, group reflections, facilitators' feedback, and key learnings were shared.

As this was the participants' first experience presenting in this format, it was noted that most had prepared well and successfully conveyed the key messages of their assigned topics. However, many participants expressed how challenging it felt to speak in front of a group for 5 minutes, noting that it seemed both longer and more stressful than expected. They emphasized that thorough preparation, practice, and effective time management are essential for a successful presentation of contents from Sphere Handbook. Additionally, participants gained valuable experience in using pauses, focusing on specific learning points within the allocated time, and managing the stress of public speaking.

Most of the presentations covered foundational topics such as an introduction to Sphere, protection principles, the Humanitarian Charter, the CHS, and the technical chapters.

General reflections from both participants and facilitators highlighted areas for improvement in preparation for the "Maxi" sessions. Key feedback included better time management, staying focused on the assigned topic, understanding the audience, maintaining eye contact, improving stage presence, building confidence, and ensuring more in-depth preparation. These reflections were considered essential for enhancing future presentations.

Topic for Maxi Session Preparation: For the upcoming Maxi Session, the topic selection process was based on the Sphere Training Packages (STPs). Participants were divided into seven groups, each consisting of two members. To ensure fairness, the topics were assigned randomly through an online lottery system using www.wheelname.com. Four groups received topics from the technical chapters (understanding part) of the STPs, while the remaining three groups were

assigned topics from the applying part, specifically STPs 11, 13, and 16. The welcome and introduction (STP 1) and evaluation (STP 20) sessions were purposefully excluded from the selection process. This method ensured equal distribution and engagement across essential topics. The groups, their names, and the assigned topics are outlined in Table 3 : Maxi PLS group arrangement

Table 3 : Maxi PLS group arrangement

Group	Participants name	STP #	Topic
Group1	Askale Aderaw and Yonas Moges	STP 13	Sphere, assessment & analysis
Group 2	Hundera Teferi and Caster Mulume	STP 9	Shelter and settlement
Group 3	Teketel Endrais and Guled Ismail	STP 8	Food security and nutrition
Group 4	Abdurashid Godana and Abraham Melaku	STP 7	WASH
Group 5	Teshome Tsehay and Yitbarek G/sellassie	STP 10	Health
Group 6	Assefa Wolde and Yoseph Endrias	STP 16	Sphere and coordination
Group 7	Wayuma Belay and Assefa Tesfay	STP 11	Using Sphere in practice

Wrap-up and Daily Evaluation (Day 2): A participatory daily revision exercise was conducted using a question-and-answer format to reinforce key learnings. The second day was productive, featuring a variety of engaging exercises that allowed participants to dive deeper into the content and gain a thorough understanding of adult learning principles. The interactive approach contributed to a positive learning atmosphere and strengthened comprehension across the group.

8.3 Day 3

Recap and Review of Feedback: During the recap session, participants reviewed and presented the key takeaways from [Day 2](#), based on the daily evaluation and sessions covered. They expressed their appreciation for the comprehensive exploration of adult learning principles, highlighting how these can be effectively applied to the design of session plans for various trainings and workshops. The emphasis on practical application was especially valued, as it gave them a clear framework for planning and facilitating future learning events with confidence and clarity.

Session 1: Adult Learning Clinics

This session focused on strategies to address the diverse needs and preferred learning styles (VARK) of participants, as well as effectively managing challenging behaviors and personalities during Sphere and other training events (Figure 14). Led by the lead trainer, the session began with a brainstorming activity where participants were asked what came to mind when they heard the term "clinics" in a training context. Several participants humorously associated the term with managing "patients" or challenging behaviors within the training environment. This metaphor helped frame the discussion, leading to deeper reflections on practical approaches for handling difficult situations and ensuring that all participants remain engaged and supported throughout the learning process.

This session addressed strategies for meeting the needs and preferred learning styles (VARK) as well as managing challenging behaviors and personalities during Sphere and other events. The session was led by the lead trainer and began with a brainstorming question on *what comes to their mind when they see the term clinics in the training context*. Few of the participants reflected that the topic is related to managing challenging behaviors (“patients” in training halls).

Learning Styles (VARK models): A VARK learning style questionnaire was customized and participants were given the opportunity to fill in the appropriate answer and reflect on their dominant learning preference (;/ 14). The aim was to show that participants have different learning preferences and hence the need to employ different strategies to address these diverse needs and preferences. Following this, participants discussed in pairs and presented their responses on different strategies that help to meet the different learning styles. Finally, a summary of the strategies specific to the learning styles was presented by lead trainer.



Figure 14: VARK model

Managing Challenging Behaviors: This sub-topic was explored through an engaging group activity focused on matching 10 potential challenging behaviors with strategies to prevent and manage them. Participants were divided into four groups, each tasked with completing a fun matching activity and presenting their results using flip charts. Afterward, they walked around to observe the similarities and differences in their peers' answers, culminating in a whole-class discussion and summary. The key takeaway was that the most effective way to manage challenging behaviors is to prevent them before they arise by engaging participants, being a role model, and creating a safe and supportive learning environment (Figure 15). When challenging behaviors do occur, various strategies can be employed to address them effectively.

G1 - Adult Learning Clinic

Challenging behaviour :

- Facilitator 'd be aware of challenging behaviours
- 10 different behaviours

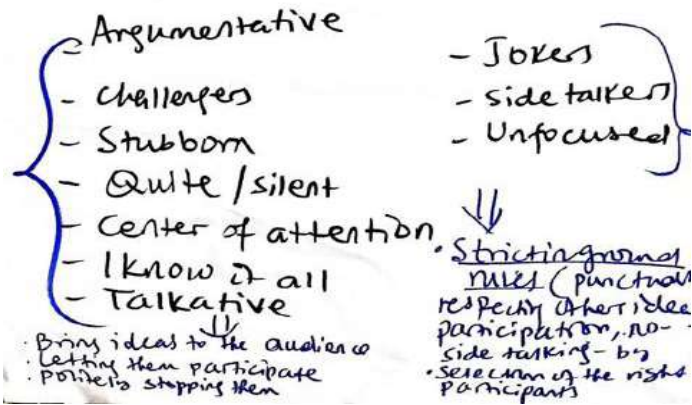


Figure 15: List of potential challenging behaviour

Session 2: Becoming Effective Trainer (qualities, roles, and facilitation skills)

This session aimed to explore the qualities of successful trainers, differentiate between the roles of a trainer and a facilitator, and provide practical insights, tips, and strategies for effectively leading small group facilitation. It also introduced participants to selected facilitation methods. The session began with an explanation of the distinctions between a facilitator and a trainer, followed by an analysis of when and how a trainer transitions into a facilitator or learner, using a Venn diagram to illustrate the overlap. Participants then engaged in pair discussions to identify the qualities of an effective trainer, which were shared in the plenary.

The lead trainer also explained the criteria for forming groups for the upcoming maxi participant-led session. This was followed by small group discussions focused on strategies and activities to employ at the beginning, during, and after small group exercises. The session concluded with individual participants matching training methods with their descriptions and application contexts.

Overall, the session emphasized that adults have diverse learning styles, behaviors, and needs. As a Sphere Trainer, one must balance the roles of trainer, facilitator, and learner. A Sphere learning event must be thoughtfully designed to address the learning needs and styles of participants to effectively achieve its objectives.

Session 3: Giving and Receiving Feedback

This session aimed to enhance participants' knowledge and skills in giving and receiving constructive feedback. It provided opportunities for participants to actively engage in both giving and receiving feedback, with an emphasis on how constructive feedback can enhance self-awareness, personal development, and overall performance improvement.

Participants were asked to provide feedback on sessions facilitated by the lead trainer, with common themes highlighting the participatory and interactive nature of the sessions and activities. The lead trainer then communicated the learning objectives and key takeaways, followed by facilitating three activities designed to reinforce the principles of constructive feedback. The session concluded with a plenary discussion, allowing participants to reflect on their learning and further explore the importance of effective feedback in fostering growth and development.

In a **Think-Pair-Share** activity, participants were first asked to reflect individually on a time when they received either negative or positive feedback. They were then paired up to discuss their experiences, focusing on the factors that made the feedback they received useful or less effective. After this, the pairs shared their discussions with the larger group.

The key takeaway from the activity was that past experiences of giving and receiving feedback influence current practices. Additionally, the activity emphasized that various factors could impact the usefulness of feedback, such as timing, tone, and the relationship between the giver and receiver of feedback. This reflection helped participants understand how these factors can shape their approach to providing and receiving feedback in the future.

Small group discussion: Participants were split into three groups and asked to discuss and present their results on three questions: *What do you think is the importance of feedback? How do we structure feedback to make it constructive? How do you describe constructive feedback?* Participants shared their experiences and the importance of feedback in line with the questions. The lead trainer finally underlined making feedback constructive by describing the strengths at the beginning and end of each feedback cycle and mentioning areas of improvement in the middle.

Case Study: Participants were presented with the following scenario:

"Imagine that you have organized a four-day Sphere learning event and encounter a participant who consistently arrives late, despite offering valuable insights and contributions when present."

Participants were then asked to consider how they would respond to this behavior. The discussion centered around four possible approaches:

- No feedback
- Negative feedback
- Positive feedback
- Constructive feedback

Most participants emphasized the importance of first understanding the reasons behind the participant's tardiness. They highlighted the value of approaching the individual during a break to have a private conversation, rather than addressing it publicly. This approach allows for a more empathetic and respectful dialogue, ensuring the participant feels valued for their contributions while also addressing the issue of punctuality.

The discussion also reflected that a constructive feedback approach would be most effective. They discussed how constructive feedback could acknowledge the participant's insightful contributions while gently addressing the impact of their late arrival on the group dynamic. The goal is to maintain a positive and productive learning environment without undermining the participant's engagement. The key improvement discussed was the need to balance empathy with accountability, ensuring feedback is given in a way that both supports the participant and respects the learning process for the entire group.

Plenary session: The lead trainer explained the importance of feedback as a learning tool using the Johari window and feedback theory; addressed how participants could structure constructive feedback and the golden rules of feedback (safe learning environment, power balance, and effective communication), and techniques of giving and receiving feedback (Figure 16). The key message was that giving and receiving constructive feedback is an essential learning tool for self-awareness, personal development, and performance improvement. Feedback is productive if it is authentic, based on observation, and relates to performance and progress.

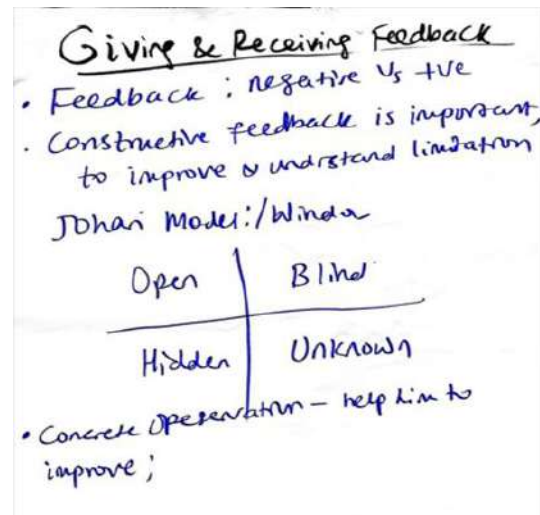


Figure 16: Johari Window theory

Session 4: Preparation for Maxi session (session planning)

Before the Maxi STP presentations began, participants were divided into seven groups. Topics were assigned to each group through a lottery system, and each group received printed copies of the relevant Sphere Training Package (STP) materials for their assigned topic (Table 3 : Maxi PLS group arrangement Table 3). Groups were asked to develop and submit a session plan for approval, after which each group received feedback and final approval from the facilitators.

At the outset of the presentations, it was clearly communicated that feedback would be given to both individuals and the group based on key performance criteria, including:

- **Preparation**
- **Teamwork**
- **Facilitation skills**
- **Practical activities**
- **Technical knowledge**
- **Session management** (time, question handling, group dynamics, and feedback integration)
- **Resource utilization** (use of space, PowerPoint presentations, videos, flip charts, etc.)

Two designated individuals were assigned to provide structured feedback for each presenter, ensuring that both individual performance and group collaboration were evaluated.

This structured approach not only encouraged thorough preparation and strong group coordination but also ensured that feedback was comprehensive, covering both the content and delivery of the session.

Session 5 -6: Presentation for Maxi session

Participants were given dedicated time to prepare and practice their 45-minute presentations on their assigned topics. During this preparation phase, facilitators were available to offer support, helping participants with various aspects of their presentations, including:

- **Preparation and organization**
- **Selection of relevant materials**
- **Choosing appropriate presentation methods**

This support ensured that participants could confidently design their sessions, aligning their content with the Sphere standards.

On the first day of presentations, two groups delivered their sessions. After each presenter concluded, the designated feedback providers offered **constructive feedback**. This feedback was based on previously outlined criteria, ensuring a focus on areas such as session preparation, facilitation skills, and resource utilization. This process allowed participants to refine their skills and apply the feedback in future presentations.

The structured practice and feedback sessions contributed to a collaborative and supportive learning environment, encouraging continuous improvement.

Daily Evaluation Process: Each day, participants were asked to evaluate the sessions using reflective statements such as, "Today I was engaged when... most" and "...least." These prompts encouraged participants to think critically about their engagement and the factors that influenced it (Figure 17).

The daily evaluations were carefully reviewed by the organizers, who appreciated the participants' feedback, particularly the value placed on the **participatory discussions** and **engaged interactions**. Based on the feedback, the organizers acknowledged the importance of maintaining these elements throughout the remaining days of the event.

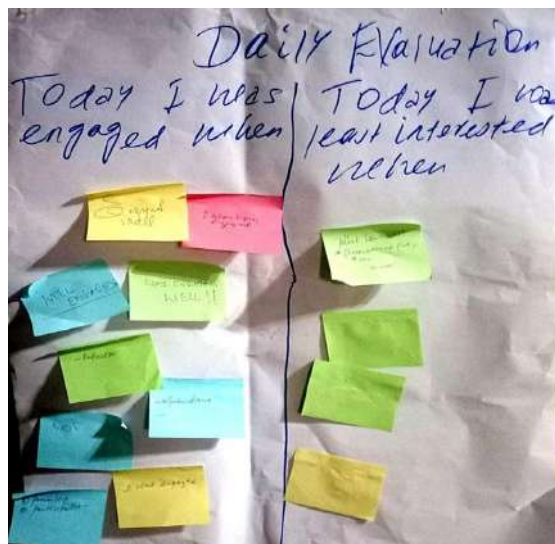


Figure 17: Daily evaluation reflection

8.4 Day 4

Wrapping up and Recap: Day 4 began with a structured wrap-up and recap of key sessions from Day 3. Participants were divided into four groups, each focusing on one of the following topics:

1. **Adult Learning Clinics**
2. **Effective Facilitation**
3. **Giving and Receiving Feedback**
4. **PLS Five-Minute Session**

Each group was tasked with summarizing the key takeaways from their assigned topic. This approach encouraged participants to actively engage in reflective learning and allowed them to reinforce their understanding of the previous day's content through peer discussion.

Following the group discussions, the lead facilitator led a comprehensive wrap-up session. He highlighted strategies for **managing challenging behaviors** during training and workshops, emphasizing practical approaches and techniques to maintain a positive and productive learning environment.

Session 1 to 5: Participants-led Presentation (45 minutes) - continuation

The purpose of the participant-led sessions was to empower participants to take full control of the session from start to finish, including planning, organizing, and leading their presentations. Beginning on Day 3 and concluding on Day 4, all seven sessions (Table 3) were facilitated by the participants themselves. Each group presented for about 45 minutes, followed by a 15-minute feedback session that included self-assessment, peer feedback, and insights from the facilitators. Feedback teams were assigned before the presentations, ensuring that a comprehensive review took place for each group. Participants demonstrated a good grasp of the content and applied a variety of facilitation skills, which was acknowledged as a positive outcome of the sessions.

However, several areas for improvement were identified. Time management emerged as a key challenge, with some groups finding it difficult to select activities that fit within the available time while still meeting the session objectives. This highlighted the need for better alignment between the content, activities and the time allotted. Additionally, while participants showed encouraging facilitation skills, there was room for improvement in incorporating a wider range of learning styles. Catering to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners could make the sessions more inclusive and engaging for all participants.

Another area for growth was group collaboration. While teamwork was generally good, it was noted that group coordination could be further strengthened. By focusing on these elements, the participants will be able to deliver more cohesive, well-timed, and inclusive sessions in the future.

To support these improvements, the following strategies were recommended: offering brief guidance on time management for presentations, encouraging participants to integrate diverse learning styles into their session plans, and enhancing group dynamics through pre-session

mentoring. By addressing these areas, future participant-led sessions can be even more polished and effective.

8.5 DAY 5

Session 1: Learning Review

This session aimed to provide participants with the opportunity to review, share, and consolidate their learning, as well as reflect on their key takeaways. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their overall learning from the Sphere ToT and, more specifically, on the participant-led sessions. After all Maxi sessions (facilitation and feedback) were completed, participants engaged in discussions around key questions such as: What have they learned? How will they connect their learning to future work? How will they apply it? They were also encouraged to express their feelings as graduates of the Sphere ToT in Ethiopia.

Participants expressed that they felt more skilled and confident as facilitators, having identified and addressed both facilitation and technical gaps. Many shared that they felt ready to go beyond becoming just listed Sphere trainers, believing that the skills acquired would enable them to deliver high-quality Sphere events. They appreciated the ToT as a platform for both giving and receiving effective feedback, which they found invaluable for their development. Throughout the five days, the facilitators responded to participants' needs effectively and managed various participant behaviors well, which contributed to the success of the training. The participants' own commitment and engagement were highlighted as key factors in making the ToT a success. Additionally, they recognized the importance of identifying and utilizing Sphere resources for their future work, seeing this as a valuable opportunity for continuous learning.

However, participants also emphasized certain areas for improvement. They noted the importance of enhancing time management, communication, and addressing specific needs in future sessions. They expressed a desire to refine these skills by designing and delivering more sessions tailored to the needs of participants. Moving forward, participants identified several essential points for their future work, including:

- Contextually adopting Sphere Training Packages (STPs) with flexibility, participation, and thoughtful session planning.
- Providing timely feedback and effectively managing unexpected behaviors during training.
- Conducting more thorough needs assessments (recognizing that past assessments may not have been as detailed as necessary) to improve session planning.
- Learning from the unique aspects of the Sphere ToT, particularly in presentation, discussion, and session leadership.
- Identifying and utilizing rich resources and platforms for session plan preparation, training needs assessments, training checklists, and customized training materials.

The session concluded with a review of key learnings, where participants were encouraged to list three essential takeaways that they would apply in any future Sphere event. This reflective

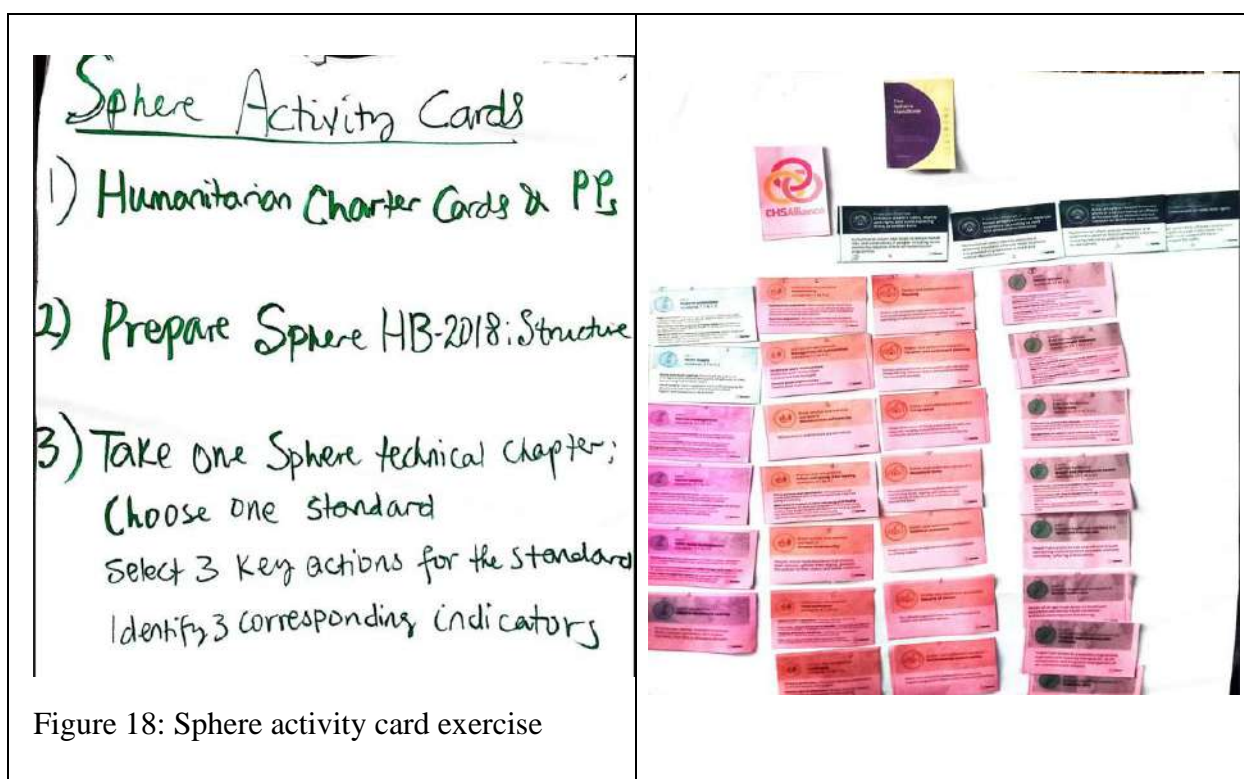
approach allowed participants to consolidate their learning and feel better prepared for their roles as Sphere trainers.

Session 2: Sphere Activity Cards

Considering the specific needs of participants for the Sphere content session, the facilitators thoughtfully adapted and designed the session to enhance both engagement and learning outcomes. Recognizing that interactive and practical methods resonate well with adult learners, the facilitators incorporated a game-based approach to ensure the content was both informative and enjoyable.

Printed Sphere cards, featuring essential elements like the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), the Humanitarian Charter, Protection Principles, and technical chapters, were distributed to participants. This allowed them to actively participate in organizing the structure of the Sphere Handbook. Furthermore, participants were asked to select one Sphere Minimum Standard and identify three key actions with their corresponding indicators, presenting their work on flip charts (Figure 18).

By adopting this approach, the facilitators ensured that the session not only met the participants' learning needs but also fostered a deeper connection to the Sphere content. The interactive nature of the session enabled participants to internalize key concepts through hands-on practice, making it easier for them to apply this knowledge in future trainings and real-world scenarios.



Session 3: Welcome to Sphere Community

This virtual session was led by Felicity Fallon, Head of Learning and Events from the Sphere Geneva Office, who played a key role in supporting the preparation of the Sphere ToT. Felicity began by warmly welcoming participants to the Sphere community and engaging them in a discussion to assess their understanding of Sphere and its related concepts. She initiated the conversation by asking, “*What is Sphere?*”, which prompted numerous responses from the participants, creating an interactive and inclusive atmosphere (Figure 19).

Felicity provided valuable insights into the structure and workings of Sphere, including information about Sphere focal points, listed trainers, available resources, and how the Sphere Secretariat operates. The most crucial part of the session focused on the pathway to becoming a Sphere trainer. Felicity outlined the key requirements for achieving this status, which include:

- A thorough understanding of Sphere and the Sphere Handbook.
- Experience in implementing Sphere in the field or a solid knowledge of its application.
- A strong grasp of adult learning methods, along with proven training and facilitation skills.
- Conducting at least five workshops, including two based on Sphere standards.
- Attending an officially recognized Sphere ToT, like the current session.
- A willingness to provide Sphere with references from peer trainers, participants, and organizers of past trainings.

Participants raised a few concerns, particularly about accessing resources to facilitate additional Sphere training, including the Sphere Handbooks. In response, Felicity acknowledged that while Sphere does face limitations in terms of financial and human resources to support global efforts, there is some possibility of providing handbooks, though financial support may not always be available.

Overall, Felicity's session was highly informative and provided participants with a clear understanding of the steps required to become a Sphere trainer, as well as practical advice on accessing and utilizing Sphere resources effectively. Her support and guidance were greatly appreciated by the participants.



Figure 19: The virtual “Welcome to the Sphere community” session

Session 4: Individual Action Planning

This session aimed to guide participants in developing individual action plans to advance their Sphere capacity-building efforts. Each participant was provided with an action plan template and tasked with preparing a six-month Sphere event action plan, which they would later submit to the lead trainer and organizer. While some participants initially found it challenging to draft action plans on the spot due to potential cost implications, most acknowledged that, as decision-makers, they had access to capacity strengthening budget lines within their organizations.

Despite these concerns, all participants successfully submitted their action plans during the session. Several participants had the opportunity to present their plans, allowing for feedback and shared learning.

Participants expressed a strong interest in organizing Sphere events, either online or in-person, and many voiced their desire to cascade Sphere knowledge within their own organizations. They also requested ongoing coaching support from the facilitators, to which the trainer responded positively, offering assistance for those who present action plans over the next six months. Additionally, participants proposed creating a Sphere Community in Ethiopia through a WhatsApp group to foster ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Session 5: Collective Plans and Next Steps

This session was led by the organizers from CST and focused on engaging participants in reflecting on their experience as Sphere ToT graduates in Ethiopia. The session began with participants sharing their thoughts and feelings about completing the Sphere ToT. Many expressed deep

appreciation to the organizers for providing the opportunity, as well as to the facilitators for delivering a high-quality ToT that exceeded their expectations.

The organizers, in turn, expressed their pride and satisfaction with the success of the training, highlighting the relevance and the potential impact of the Sphere ToT. They also took the opportunity to introduce their plans for 2024 and 2025, which involve cascading Sphere events to further expand the reach of Sphere standards. Importantly, the organizers emphasized their commitment to involving the current participants in these future events, recognizing them as valuable contributors to the ongoing efforts in Ethiopia. This forward-looking session reinforced the importance of continued collaboration and the participants' role in advancing Sphere standards within their organizations and communities.

Session 6: Closing and Certificate Distribution

The closing ceremony of the Sphere ToT was led by Mrs. Askale Aderaw from CST, along with the lead facilitator (Figure 20). The ceremony began with a heartfelt note of thanks, as Mrs. Askale addressed the participants, inquiring about their learning experiences throughout the ToT. She then distributed training certificates to each participant, acknowledging their commitment and effort during the course.

Mrs. Askale expressed her gratitude for the participants' active engagement and congratulated them on successfully completing the ToT. She highlighted her hope that the knowledge and skills gained during the training would contribute to both the participants and their organizations, enhancing their ability to implement humanitarian and development programs more effectively and efficiently, while promoting quality and accountability in the sector.



Figure 20: Certificate presentation at Sphere ToT closing ceremony

The session provided an opportunity for participants to complete online evaluation surveys and offer oral feedback, enabling the organizers to gather valuable insights for enhancing future trainings. Following the evaluations, the ceremony concluded with a group photo to celebrate the participants' accomplishments, alongside the distribution of certificates to recognize their successful completion of the ToT.

Participants were also briefed on plans to establish a long-lasting Sphere community, aimed at fostering ongoing collaboration and knowledge-sharing among the graduates. To strengthen these

connections, a social event was organized for the evening, creating an informal space for participants to network and build lasting professional relationships.

9. Training Quality Control Measures

The quality of the Sphere ToT was carefully aligned with the needs and context of the participants through several key measures, ensuring relevance and effectiveness:

- **Participant Selection:** A guideline on participants selection criteria and process was developed by the lead facilitator and shared with CST to guide the process of selecting ToT participants. While these criteria ensured a structured and transparent framework, the final selection was carried out by CST based on this guidance, aiming to identify participants with relevant experience and commitment.
- **Pre-Training Assessment:** Prior to the ToT, a Pre-Sphere ToT webinar was conducted to assess participants' expectations and special needs, allowing the training to be tailored accordingly.
- **Continuous Feedback and Adjustments:** Daily feedback was collected from participants, and necessary adjustments were made to the sessions to enhance their relevance and address emerging needs.
- **Future Action Plans:** Participants agreed on action plans for cascading Sphere knowledge and events to their respective staff, ensuring the continuation of learning and implementation beyond the ToT.
- **Comprehensive Evaluation:** A centrally prepared online evaluation survey, designed and directly managed by Sphere, was used to assess both the training and the performance of the training team. Participants completed this survey immediately after the training, ensuring that thorough and objective feedback was gathered in real-time for quality improvement. This approach ensured consistency and alignment with Sphere's global standards for evaluating training effectiveness.
- **Face-to-Face Feedback and Reflection:** Participants had the opportunity to provide face-to-face feedback and reflect on their experiences as Sphere ToT graduates, offering insights into what worked well and areas for future improvement.
- **Contact List and Action Plan Submission:** Participants completed a contact list and submitted their individual action plans, formalizing their commitment to apply the Sphere principles in their future work.

These measures ensured that the training was responsive, participant-centered, and aligned with the overarching goal of building Sphere capacity in Ethiopia.

10. Sphere ToT Evaluation

Overall, participants expressed high satisfaction with the Sphere ToT event, reflecting confidence in the training's impact. They felt that the training not only met but, in many cases, exceeded their learning objectives. The ToT was executed as planned, fostering a safe and positive learning environment. Participants emphasized that the training boosted their confidence and inspired them to think beyond merely becoming listed Sphere trainers.

An independent **SurveyMonkey** application, directly managed by the Sphere Geneva Office, was used to gather feedback on participants' overall satisfaction with the event, the relevance of the content, and the individual performance of the facilitators. The survey employed a 5-point scale and included open-ended questions for more detailed feedback. Of the 14 participants, 12 completed the evaluation, which was automatically submitted to the Sphere database. Felicity Fallon, Head of Learning and Events at Sphere Geneva, downloaded the completed forms and shared the results with the training team.

The survey results indicated overwhelmingly positive feedback:

- **Overall Satisfaction:** Nearly all participants (93%) rated the workshop as ‘Very Good.’
- **Relevance and Effectiveness:**
 - All participants (100%) strongly agreed that the training handouts were relevant and helped them clearly understand the content.
 - 93% of participants strongly agreed that the program was relevant to their jobs, met their individual objectives, and encouraged active participation.
 - 86% strongly agreed that they would recommend the ToT to their colleagues and that the content was appropriate for their background and experience.
 - Approximately 65% strongly agreed that the Sphere subject matter was thoroughly covered.

These results reflect the success of the ToT in providing a valuable, relevant, and well-executed training experience, with participants feeling empowered and equipped to apply their new skills in their professional contexts.

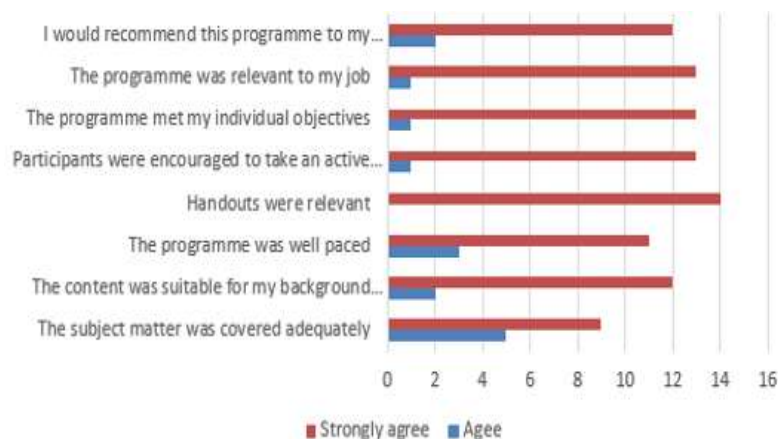


Figure 21: Participants' response to training relevance and effectiveness

Workshop Rating Overview

Participants were asked to rate various aspects of the workshop, and the results were overwhelmingly positive. Nearly 93% of participants (N=13) rated the training facilitation methods, overall organization, and small group exercises as "very good." In terms of logistics, 72% of participants gave the meals/refreshments and the use of PowerPoint presentations and videos a "very good" rating. However, for the meeting space, 64% rated it as "good," while 7% rated it as "average."

These results reflect the strong effectiveness of the training's structure and facilitation methods. At the same time, they indicate some opportunities for improvement in logistical aspects, particularly regarding the meeting space and the multimedia resources, which could be enhanced for future workshops.

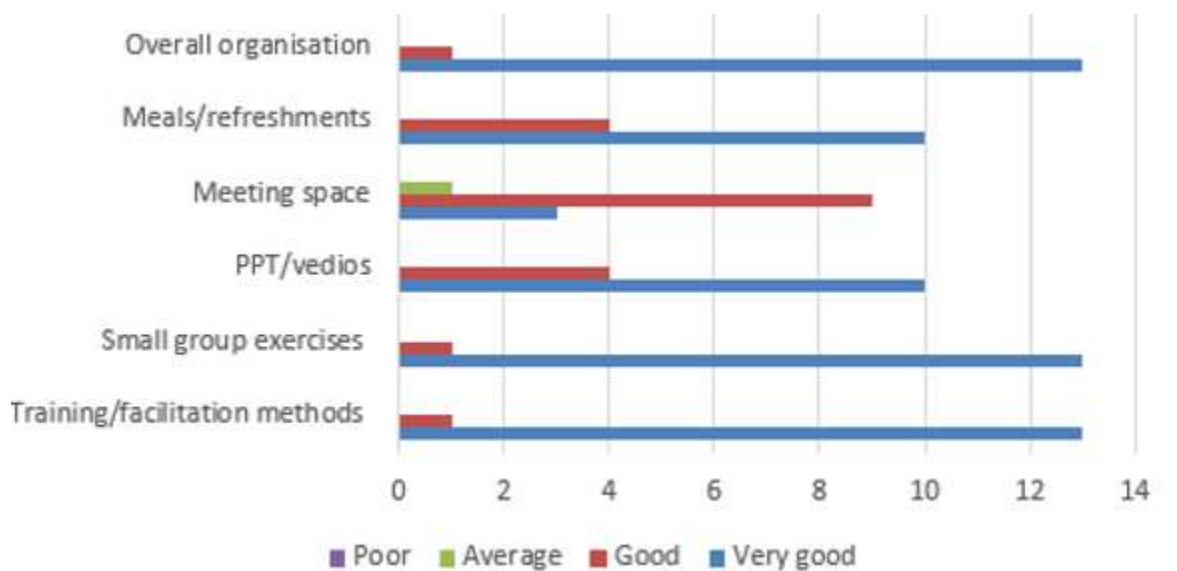


Figure 22: Participants evaluation organization and logistics

Training Team Competencies

Participants evaluated the performance of each facilitator/trainer across seven competency areas. Overall, participants expressed agreement to strong agreement that members of the training team demonstrated the required competencies. They highlighted the importance of practical examples and stories shared by the facilitators, noting that these elements greatly enhanced the learning experience by making the content more relatable and engaging. The consistently high ratings reflect participants' confidence in the facilitators' expertise and their ability to effectively convey the material.

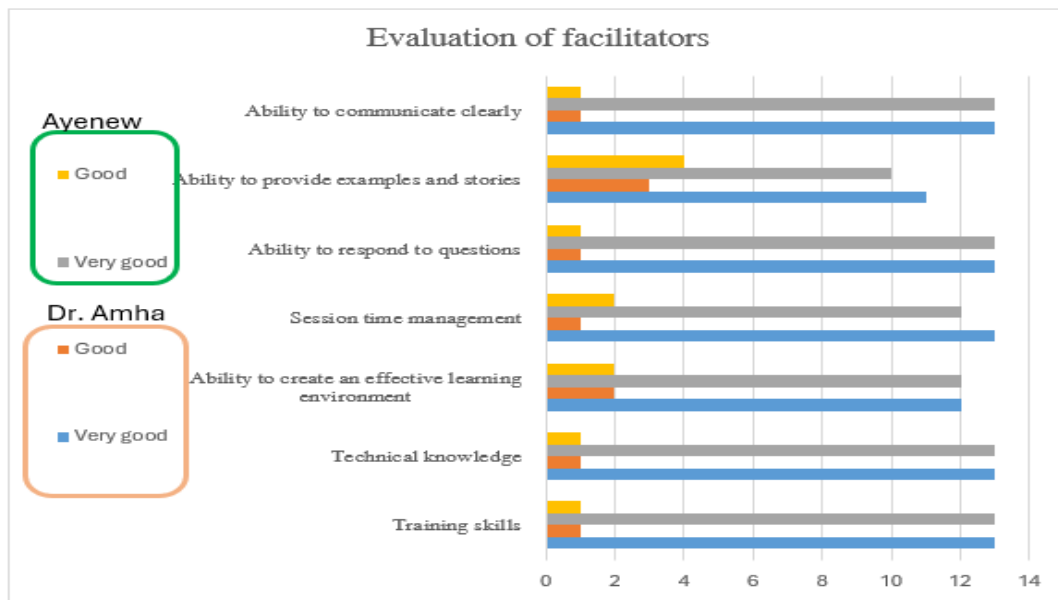


Figure 23: Participants evaluation of training team competencies

Length of the ToT and Participant Feedback

Nearly 86% of participants (N=12) agreed that the duration of the workshop was appropriate and well-suited to the content covered. However, a small portion of participants (7%) felt that the ToT was too short, while another 7% felt it was too long. This feedback suggests that while the majority were satisfied with the workshop length, a few participants had differing opinions, indicating that individual preferences regarding the length of the training may vary based on their personal learning pace or expectations.

Open Ended Question and Response from Participants

What DID YOU LIKE MOST about this training?
Depth of knowledge on foundation, technical chapters, interactive references, and the facilitation skills that we need to proceed.
Comprehensiveness, interactive approach and Methodology (Adultery learning styles and Technics and team sprit)
It was supported by practical exercises and learning aids.
The training was absolutely relevant and applicable in practice.
Facilitators training methodology was superb, training materials provided were enough, trainees were active, individual and group exercises was excellent
The contents and methodology of the facilitating the training
Group work and method of participating participants'
I liked the practical part on how to become an effective facilitator and the group work which made the training lively
All and specifically the group session plans that we were presenting. The founding and technical chapters. Online training materials and the different country experiences demonstration enables me to understand the minimum standards.
Content and methodology
I liked most about this training was that the balance between the content and facilitation skills was perfect. The methodologies employed were diverse which we could learn more. The training was participatory.

Trainees were made to engage highly through Q &A, pair discussion, small group discussions and above all the maxi participant led facilitation was something we have profited from.
The contents of the training
The facilitation, communication and role play
The facilitation approach and the content
What DID YOU LIKE LEAST about this training?
The space is too narrow to accommodate.
None
The First day training venue and many sessions on adult learning theories
From my point of view all are relevant and nothing to be consider as least.
Training hall, the first hall good but was so cold due to the weather while the second hall was small hence this needed to be considered in the future planning
Nothing.
I was well with all things except the first day of training space
Everything was good to me, but I feel there should be more focus on the Sphere subject matter and less on how to facilitate.
NA
Too many documents
The training venue was small. No enough ventilation and lighting coupled with the projector light which could affect the eye. The weather was also too cold.
None
The meeting room was not the most suitable one
NA
How do you think this training could be improved?
This training is very organized and to the standard and the logistics provided. for the time please continue.
First of participants need to revise the documents and internalize. then It can be cascaded in their locality with different humanitarian actors
More practical exercises on sphere foundation and technical chapters by reducing adult learning sessions
It is well organized. So, keep as it is.
Training was perfect, I met my expectations, and at moment I don't have any points that i can say needs improvement.
It needs individuals' commitment to master it.
Knowing every participant behavior much improve the training skill deliver
To provide more time on the Actual Sphere Standard subject matter and less on how to become an effective facilitator
More support from the global sphere project office
Minimize the training materials
Only the training venue would require improvement.
It is fine
Best meeting room and space for exercise to be suitable
Increasing number of co-facilitators could the reduce the workload from the facilitators and enable get more time

Do you have any other comments?
Let's have strong communication, support each other.
Keep in doing the same work other times
sphere training is relevant to all humanitarian workers. Hence, I would suggest that by any possible means I wish all humanitarian workers should have an opportunity to get this training. Because it set reasonable standard for every each of emergency program implementation.
I Thank CST for organizing the training and the two facilitators for their superb facilitation
As humanitarian crisis are increasing from time to time is is better to train many people in order to deliver quality and accountable humanitarian assistance.
No
Great environment Great team among the facilitators; Great environment from the participants Great service from the hotel
No
No
No
this training should be given almost for all the staffs that are working for the humanitarians.
Thank you for the opportunity
No

11. Lessons and Recommendations

- **Tailoring Agenda and Content:** Revising the agenda and content based on participants' last-minute expectations helps create a safe and supportive learning environment. This approach allows sessions to be aligned with participants' existing knowledge and skill levels, enhancing engagement and relevance.
- **Involvement of Recent Sphere and CHS Graduates:** Including recent Sphere and CHS training graduates in the Sphere ToT adds significant value by balancing Sphere content with adult learning principles and facilitation skills. Their recent experiences enrich the learning process for all participants.
- **More Case Studies, Examples, and Storytelling:** Participants expressed the need for more practical cases, examples, storytelling, and various group discussions to make the content more relatable and engaging. These elements could further enhance learning outcomes.
- **Effective Coordination and Support:** Strong coordination between the organizers, trainers, and the Sphere office was a key factor in the success of the Sphere ToT. Support from the Sphere office, particularly in logistical and content-related areas, played a critical role in the event's effectiveness.
- **Commitment and Participant Selection:** The success of the Sphere ToT was largely due to the commitment and dedication of the participants. Selecting the right participants, based on clear and objective criteria, was crucial to achieving the training's goals.
- **Inviting Sphere Personnel:** Having personnel from the Sphere office lead sessions on becoming a Sphere-listed trainer clarifies the process and fosters trust. This involvement helps participants better understand the requirements and motivates them to pursue listing.

- **Mentoring Co-Facilitators:** Involving and mentoring co-facilitators during the Sphere ToT is a valuable opportunity for developing future Sphere-listed trainers, ensuring continuity and capacity-building within the community.
- **Training Venue:** The training venue should be carefully considered before the event to ensure sufficient space for group work and posting materials. Proper planning for the venue can significantly impact the effectiveness of group activities.
- **Pre-ToT Training:** It is recommended that relevant Sphere training, whether online or in person, be provided prior to the ToT. This would allow the ToT to focus more on facilitation techniques and adult learning skills rather than covering basic content.
- **Strict Participant Selection Criteria:** The participant selection process should adhere to strict criteria, ensuring that those selected have a clear commitment to cascade the training to others in their organizations.
- **Out-of-Town Training:** Hosting the training outside of Addis Ababa proved to be beneficial, as it allowed participants to focus fully on the ToT without the distractions of their regular work environments.

These lessons and recommendations provide valuable insights for improving future Sphere ToT events, ensuring they continue to build capacity effectively and create meaningful learning experiences.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Final Sphere ToT Agenda



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

CST Ethiopia

CAFOD SCIAF Trócaire

Sphere Training of Trainers (TOT) Draft Agenda						
CAFOD, SCIAF, and Trócaire (CST) -Ethiopia September 2-6, 2024; Liesak Hotel, Bishoftu, Ethiopia						
		Sept 2	Sept 3	Sept 4	Sept 5	Sept 6
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Block 1 8:30-10:00	15'	Welcoming Remark	Recap	Recap	Recap	Recap
	30'	Introduction and Icebreaker	Adult Learning Principles	Adults Learning Clinic	Participant Led Maxi Session (45 minutes)	Learning Reviews
	45'	Introduction to the Course		How to Become Effective Facilitator		Sphere Activity Cards
Break	20'	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
Block 2 10:20-11:30	70'	Revisiting Sphere	Assessing Learning Needs	Introduction to Group Presentations and Tips	Participant Led Maxi Session (45 minutes)	Welcome to Sphere Training Community
Block 3 11:30-12:30	60'	Revisiting Sphere Foundation Chapters (Navigating STPs)	Designing a Learning Event	Training Checklist & Measuring Training Impact	Participant Led Maxi Session (45 minutes)	Individual Action Planning
Lunch Break	60'	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Block 4 13:30-15:00	75'	Revisiting Sphere Technical Chapters (Navigating STPs)	Introduction to Mini Sessions	Preparation for Maxi Sessions (45 minutes)	Participant Led Maxi Session (45 minutes)	CST Ethiopia Next Steps and Plans Discussion
	15'		5-minute Presentations			
Break	20'	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
Block 5 15:20-16:50	60'	Using Sphere in practice	5-minute Presentations	Preparation for Maxi Sessions (45 minutes)	Participant Led Maxi Session (45 minutes)	Wrap-up and ToT Evaluation
	30'	Reflection on Maxi PLS				
Daily Evaluation 16:50-17:00	10'	Daily Evaluation & Feedback	Daily Evaluation & Feedback	Daily Evaluation & Feedback	Daily Evaluation & Feedback	Certificates and Group Photo

Appendix 2: Sphere ToT Participant Selection Process and Criteria

Participant Selection Process

- The lead trainer and focal point (co-facilitator) suggested how to select the right participants from previous experience.
- Participants should be recommended and selected by CST and partner organization in consultation with the lead trainer, two weeks ahead of the training.
- The selection process should ensure that the participants are coming from different parts of the country and different organizations.
- Selected participants shall fill in the application form, including the information of their experience to join humanitarian response, Sphere training, training experience, Sphere promotion plan in the future etc.
- Participant list should be confirmed two weeks ahead of the training.

Participant's Selection criteria

- operational humanitarian experience of ideally five years and have previously participated in Sphere training
- Active involvement in disaster response, prevention, mitigation, and preparedness
- Proficiency in the language of instruction of the ToT course [English] (i.e. able to train others in that language)
- Individuals from different organizations and agencies having specific responsibilities linked to quality and accountability
- Mandate and support (moral and financial) from the candidate's organization to conduct future training
- Plans for future Sphere training or its application
- Training experience
- Capacity to replicate and share the training's content.
- Geographic diversity

Appendix 3: List of Sphere ToT Participants

#	Participant name	Sex	Current organization	Position
1	Askale Aderaw	Female	CST Ethiopia-Addis Ababa	Livelihood Programme Officer
2	Yonas Moges	Male	ECC-SDCOAdB Mekelle Sub-Branch	MEAL
3	Wayuma Belay	Male	HUNDEE - Oromo Grassroots Development Initiative	Area coordinator
4	Assefa Tesfay	Male	ADCS-Adigrat	Program Manager
5	Yitbarek G/Sellasié	Male	DOC Tigray	Program Manager
6	Teshome Tsehay	Male	CST Ethiopia-Tigray	Resilience Officer
7	Assefa Wolde	Male	CST Ethiopia-Addis Ababa	Senior MEAL advisor
8	Yosef Endrias	Male	Ethiopian Catholic Church Social and Development Commission Branch Office of Soddo (ECC-SDCO Soddo)	Jinka Area Coordinator
9	Teketel Endrias	Male	Ethiopian Catholic Church Social and Development Commission Branch Office of Soddo (ECC-SDCO Soddo)	Program Manager
10	Guled Ismael	Male	CST Ethiopia-Addis Ababa	Humanitarian Program Advisor
11	Abdurashid Godana	Male	Community Initiative Facilitations and Assistance (CIFA)	Program Manager
12	Abraham Melaku	Male	Action for Integrated Sustainable Development Association (AISDA)	Sr MEAL officer
13	Caresterns George	Male	Caritas Africa	Humanitarian program officer
14	Hundera Tefere	Male	Association of Pastoralist Community for Change (APCfC)	Program Manager

Appendix 4: Trainers and Company Profile

About SEGEL Research and Training Consulting PLC (SEGEL)

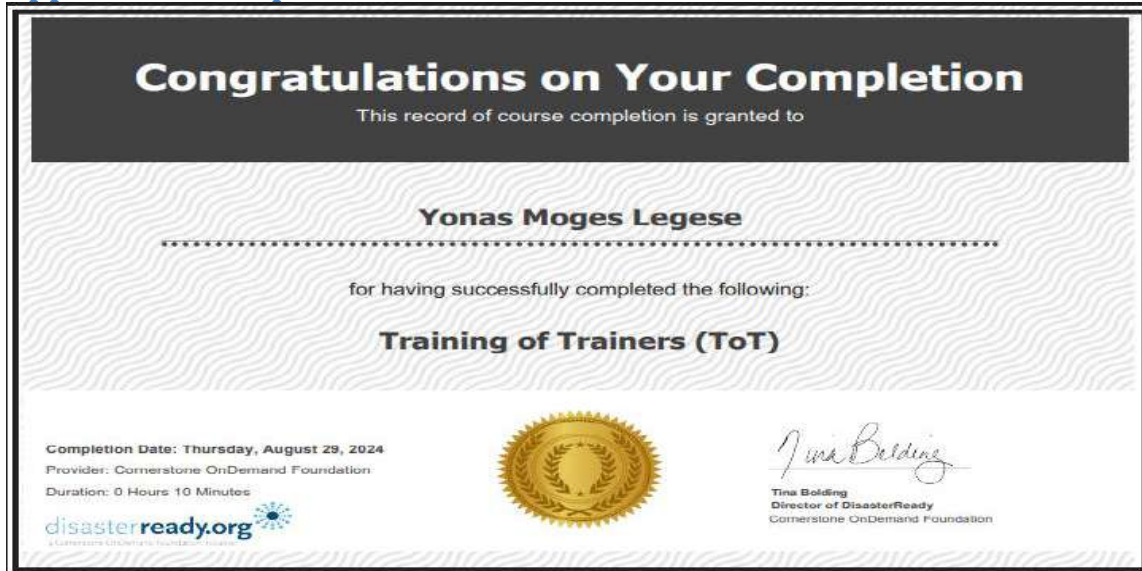
SEGEL is a consultancy services company established in 2012 and registered in Ethiopia, undertaking a growing portfolio of public policy analyses, capacity development, evaluations, and strategic planning projects for highly respected clients, including UN, ICRC, and donors (USAID, FCDO/DFID, JICA, etc.) and government ministries, and more than 85 local and international NGOs in Ethiopia. SEGEL has experience working in multi-country evaluations and studies in Somalia, Tanzania, and South Sudan, including with donor consortia. Its partnership network includes consulting companies in Europe (Wageningen Research Institute), Africa (Kilimanjaro Research Institute), and academic institutions, including the University of Amsterdam.

Facilitators

- Dr. Amha Ermias is a listed Sphere (ToT) trainer and a multi-disciplinary consultant. He has over 17 years of experience in humanitarian emergencies, public policy and management, capacity development, evaluations, and strategic planning projects for highly respected clients, including the UN, ICRC, donors (USAID, FCDP/DFID, Irish Aid, GIZ, and JICA), Ethiopian government ministries, and more than 85 local and international NGOs in Ethiopia. He also has experience working in Kenya, Tanzania, and South Sudan in multi-country evaluations and studies, including with donor consortia. He is an active member of INEE, Sphere, and ALNAP. He is also the CEO and Founder of SEGEL. He is interested in promoting quality and accountability initiatives and engaging in Humanitarian, Development, and Peace (HDP) nexus learning events.

The lead trainer had communicated with the Sphere office about the Sphere ToT before the actual workshop. There were communications and support from Felicity Fallon, Sphere's Training and Event Manager, throughout the event. In addition, Felicity facilitated the Sphere ToT's session - Welcome to Sphere Training Community, on September 6th, 2024, online from 10:30-11:30 AM, Addis Ababa time.

Appendix 5: Sample Pre-ToT Certificate



Appendix 6: Revisiting Sphere Matching Exercise

Refer Your Cards and Put the Appropriate Card for Each of the Following Blank Spaces. Post Your Answer in Your Flipchart Paper.

- 1) Sphere is a community service aimed at ensuring both quality and _____ in humanitarian assistance.
- 2) The latest Sphere's flagship publication is _____.
- 3) One of the Sphere chapters that provide the ethical and legal background to the Protection Principles, the Core Humanitarian Standard and the Minimum Standards is _____.
- 4) One of the protection principles explains how to ensure people's access to assistance according to _____ and without discrimination.
- 5) ---- _____ states what communities and people affected by crisis can expect from organisations and individuals delivering humanitarian assistance.
- 6) The main objective of _____ in humanitarian response is to reduce public health risks by creating barriers along those pathways.
- 7) One of the three tiers of malnutrition that is treated with specialised therapeutic feeding is _____.
- 8) One of Sphere technical chapters which aims to create a safe living environment is _____.
- 9) The aim of Sphere health programming is to reduce excess _____.
- 10) The general, universal, and qualitative statements which state the minimum to be achieved in any crisis are _____.

Appendix 7. Photo gallery



