

ANNUAL NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

ELEVATE Africa TVET Component

Empowering Livelihoods and Economic Vitality in Fragile and Conflict Zones — technical and vocational skills training for youth and women in Baidoa, Somalia

Reporting period	Funded by	Partners	Location
March 2025 – February 2026	KOICA	IOM · READO	Baidoa, Somalia

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Project partners and stakeholders from KOICA, IOM, READO, local authorities and AJMAL TVET in Baidoa.

SECTION 01

Project Overview

PROJECT TITLE	Empowering Livelihoods and Economic Vitality in Fragile and Conflict Zones (ELEVATE) Africa
DONOR / FUNDING PARTNER	Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)
IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS	IOM (International Organization for Migration) · READO
TVET TRAINING PROVIDER	AJMAL Technical Training Institute (TVET)
REPORTING PERIOD	March 2025 – February 2026
PROJECT LOCATION	Baidoa, Somalia
PROJECT START / END	March 2025 – January 2027
TOTAL DURATION	23 months
REPORT PREPARED BY	AJMAL Communications and Public Relations Office

Project description and scope of work

The ELEVATE Africa Project is a 23-month initiative implemented by READO in partnership with IOM and funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea through KOICA. The project aims to strengthen social cohesion, resilience and sustainable reintegration opportunities for vulnerable populations in Baidoa, particularly low-risk former associates of violent extremist organizations (VEOs) and at-risk youth.

Within this project, AJMAL TVET delivers the technical and vocational skills training component, while READO provides entrepreneurship and business training, social cohesion activities, individual learning support and case management. IOM leads the project and coordinates graduation and post-training support.

Trades delivered

Beauty Salon Services · Tie-Dye Production · Mobile Phone Repair · Tailoring

Who the project serves

Vulnerable youth and women in Baidoa, including low-risk former VEO associates and at-risk youth.

SECTION 02

Executive Summary

70
Trainees enrolled across three batches

40
Graduates from Batches 1 & 2 (100% completion)

17
Graduates self-employed (43% of Batch 1–2 graduates)

4
Market-relevant trades delivered

This annual narrative progress report covers the first year of the KOICA-funded ELEVATE Africa Project's TVET component, delivered by AJMAL TVET Training Centre in partnership with READO and IOM, for the period March 2025 – February 2026. The component equips vulnerable youth and women in Baidoa with market-relevant technical and vocational skills that support sustainable livelihoods, self-reliance, community stability and social cohesion.

During the reporting period, competency-based TVET training was delivered across four high-demand trades: Beauty Salon Services, Tie-Dye Production, Mobile Phone Repair and Tailoring. Training ran in three sequential batches with a cumulative enrolment of 70 trainees. Women made up at least half of every batch, and the clear majority of Batch 3.

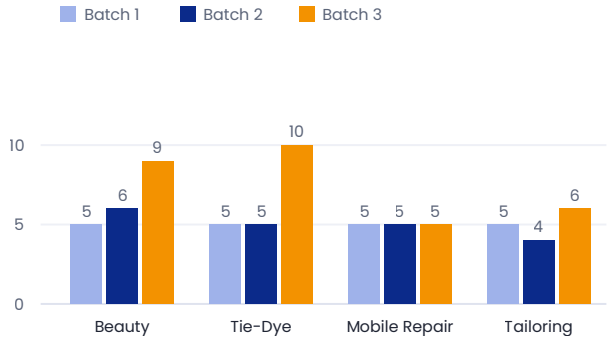
Batch 1 (March – July 2025) enrolled 20 trainees, all of whom completed training, producing 70+ tie-dye products and developing 14 business plans. **Batch 2** (August 2025 – January 2026) enrolled another 20 trainees, again with a 100% completion rate, producing 90+ tie-dye products and 17 business plans; this cohort also benefited from newly introduced work readiness training. **Batch 3** (February – August 2026) enrolled 30 trainees, the largest cohort to date, with training scheduled to conclude in August 2026.

All 40 graduates of Batches 1 and 2 received certificates of completion. A comprehensive monitoring framework — pre-training profiling and testing, daily attendance monitoring, monthly progress reports, formative and summative assessments and regular on-site visits — maintained training quality and ensured trainees were supported throughout.

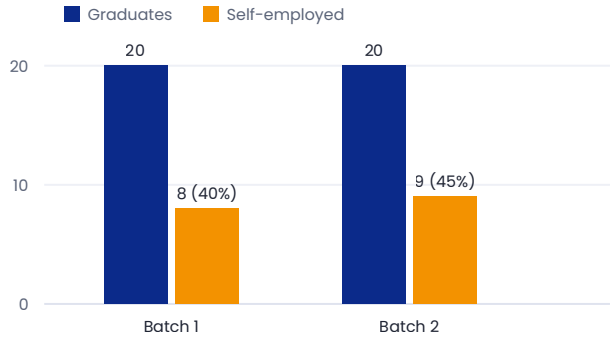
Through close coordination with READO and IOM, graduates received post-training entrepreneurship support including business advisory, start-up kits, savings group formation, market linkages and mentorship. As a result, **17 graduates (43%)** of Batches 1 and 2 established self-employment and income-generating activities across all trades.

Enrolment and outcomes at a glance

Enrolment by trade and batch



Graduates and self-employment



Challenges, lessons and the year ahead

Implementation faced challenges including high illiteracy among trainees, limited engagement of IDP youth, a short training schedule (two days per week), female trainees' household responsibilities, lack of transport funds, periodic security incidents and limited livelihood opportunities. The project responded with phased training approaches, flexible scheduling, transportation allowances and stronger multi-sectoral coordination.

Key lessons include the value of foundational literacy before technical training, targeted inclusion of IDP youth, flexible scheduling for women, transport allowances to secure attendance, and coordination with development agencies and private sector cooperatives. For the remaining project period (to January 2027), priorities are strengthening post-training support and tracking for all graduates, institutional capacity building for AJMAL TVET Centre, expanding private sector engagement and employment linkages, and end-of-project evaluation and learning documentation. The partnership between AJMAL, READO and IOM has proven effective in delivering integrated TVET and livelihood support to vulnerable populations in Baidoa.

SECTION 03

Activities and Progress Achieved

3.1 Project inception and planning

Following project commencement, READO conducted inception and planning activities to establish a strong foundation for implementation. This included reviewing project objectives, targets and implementation modalities; developing detailed work plans and schedules; recruiting project staff; orienting team members on project approaches and safeguarding principles; and establishing monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms. Stakeholder consultations with local authorities, community leaders and service providers ensured local ownership, and risk mitigation measures and referral pathways were reviewed to support beneficiary protection.

Project launch and partner coordination

READO worked closely with IOM, local authorities, community leaders and other service providers to formally launch project activities. Regular coordination meetings addressed implementation progress, beneficiary selection, referral systems and emerging challenges. Partnerships with health facilities, AJMAL TVET as the vocational training institution, and community structures were strengthened to ensure beneficiaries could access specialized services when needed.

Community mobilization and beneficiary identification

READO conducted community mobilization and awareness activities to introduce the project objectives, eligibility criteria and support services, holding meetings with community leaders, women's groups, youth representatives and local authorities. Beneficiaries were identified through a community-based, participatory process based on vulnerability criteria and individual assessments, with screening and verification ensuring support reached the most vulnerable.

Training needs assessment and curriculum finalization

A rapid pre-training needs assessment examined labour market skills gaps and beneficiaries' educational backgrounds, skill levels, livelihood interests and psychosocial needs. Findings shaped the curricula, which cover literacy and numeracy, life skills, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, psychosocial support and business development, using a participatory, level-based approach to accommodate different learning needs.

Infrastructure and equipment preparation

AJMAL is responsible for technical and vocational skills training, while READO provides entrepreneurship and business training, social cohesion activities, individual learning support and case management. Before each training cycle, AJMAL:

- Recruited and oriented competent, experienced TVET instructors and facilitators.
- Organized the training centre with adequate learning equipment and teaching materials, and procured raw materials and training consumables.
- Enrolled and oriented the selected trainees.



A Beauty Salon Services theory session at AJMAL TVET Training Centre.

3.2 Training delivery

The employability skills training programme was delivered in three batches. Batches 1 and 2 enrolled 20 trainees each and Batch 3 enrolled 30, for a cumulative reach of 70 trainees. All 40 trainees in Batches 1 and 2 completed their programmes.

Batch	Dates	Beauty	Tie-Dye	Mobile	Tailoring	Total
Batch 1	5 Mar – 31 Jul 2025	5	5	5	5	20
Batch 2	1 Aug 2025 – 31 Jan 2026	6	5	5	4	20
Batch 3	1 Feb – Aug 2026	9	10	5	6	30
Total		**20**	**20**	**15**	**15**	**70**

Batch 1

5 March – 31 July 2025 · 20 trainees · 100% completion

14 business plans | **70+** tie-dye products | **8** self-employed

The curriculum combined theory with hands-on workshops so trainees developed the technical competencies needed for employment or self-employment. Outcomes by trade are shown below.

1 Beauty Salon Services · 5 trainees

Module	Topics covered	Practical sessions	Outcomes achieved
Foundations of Hairdressing	Hair structure, scalp analysis, hygiene and sanitation, salon safety, client consultation	Daily sessions on basic haircuts, blow-drying and styling	All 5 trainees mastered foundational cutting and styling
Hair Treatment & Chemical Services	Scalp treatments, conditioning, colouring, bleaching, perming, relaxing	Supervised application with professional products	Proficiency in basic chemical services
Advanced Styling	Up-dos, braiding, special-occasion and creative styling	Workshops on bridal and event hairdressing	Improved creativity and design skills

Beauty Services	Manicure and pedicure, facial treatments, makeup	Client-ready beauty service practice	Additional services to increase income potential
Salon Management	Customer service, booking, inventory, pricing, records, business planning	Role-play, business plan development	3 viable business plans completed

All 5 trainees could independently deliver hairdressing and basic beauty services by completion. Two showed exceptional performance in advanced styling and event hair design, and trainers noted marked gains in confidence and customer interaction. Two trainees have already identified locations to open their own salons.

2 Tie-Dye Production · 5 trainees

Module	Topics covered	Practical sessions	Outcomes achieved
Introduction to Tie-Dye	History and traditions, fabric and dye types, colour theory, dye safety	Basic folding and tying, sample production	All 5 mastered basic folding and dyeing
Advanced Techniques	Shibori, batik, multi-colour and resist dyeing, pattern development	Complex patterns, multi-colour designs	Proficiency in advanced pattern-making
Fabric Preparation & Finishing	Scouring, mordanting, post-dye fixation, washing, drying, ironing	Full cycle from raw fabric to finished product	Mastery of the full production cycle
Product Development	Design, product types (scarves, shirts, bags, accessories), market trends, quality	Market-ready production and quality assessment	70+ quality products produced
Business & Marketing	Costing, pricing, display, packaging, marketing	Exhibition preparation, customer practice	4 business plans; community exhibition

All 5 trainees completed the programme with demonstrated competency across all modules; three achieved distinction in advanced pattern development. The cohort produced approximately 70–80 quality products, providing initial inventory for business start-up.

3 Mobile Phone Repair · 5 trainees

Module	Topics covered	Practical sessions	Outcomes achieved
Mobile Technology Fundamentals	Hardware components, software basics, operating systems, ESD safety	Component identification, disassembly and reassembly	Strong understanding of device architecture
Hardware Repair – Level 1	Screen, battery, charging port, speaker and microphone replacement	Hands-on repairs on real devices	Each trainee performed 10+ basic repairs
Hardware Repair – Level 2	Motherboard diagnostics, IC replacement, water damage, power issues	Advanced repairs on damaged devices	Proficiency in complex hardware repairs
Software & Firmware	OS installation, firmware updates, troubleshooting, data recovery	Installation and troubleshooting exercises	Mastery of software repair and restoration
Customer Service & Business	Communication, diagnosis and quotation, inventory, pricing	Role-play, shop management exercises	3 business plans prepared

All 5 trainees demonstrated competence in diagnosis and repair across various phone models. One trainee demonstrated exceptional skills in detailed micro-soldering work. Graduates are well positioned for employment in repair shops or to open their own businesses in Baidoa's growing market.

4 Tailoring · 5 trainees

Module	Topics covered	Practical sessions	Outcomes achieved
Sewing Machine Operation	Machine parts, threading, tension, stitch types, maintenance	Daily basic garment construction	All 5 proficient in machine operation

Pattern Making – Basic	Body measurement, block patterns, modification, drafting	Basic garment patterns	Strong foundation in pattern-making
Garment Construction – Basic	Skirts, blouses, simple dresses, trousers; cutting and finishing	2–3 complete basic garments each	Skilled in basic garment production
Garment Construction – Advanced	Traditional Somali garments (dirac, guntiino), shirts, trousers	Complete traditional and modern garments	Mastery of traditional techniques
Design & Fashion	Design principles, illustration, fabric selection	Design projects, creative garments	Design portfolios developed
Business & Entrepreneurship	Costing, pricing, customer service, order management	Business plans, mock sales	4 business plans; 2 businesses in planning

All 5 trainees demonstrated competence in garment construction, pattern-making and tailoring, with strong performance in traditional garment production — an important part of Somali cultural attire. Four trainees developed viable business plans for self-employment to be funded by the project, and the cohort excelled in both tailored menswear and traditional women's garments.

Batch 2

1 August 2025 – 31 January 2026 · 20 trainees · 100% completion

17 business plans | **90–100** tie-dye products | **9** self-employed | **New:** work readiness training

Building on lessons from Batch 1, the second cohort followed the same competency-based curriculum across the same four trades to ensure uniform quality, with an added work readiness component to strengthen employability.

Technical skills outcomes

Trade	Trainees	Completion	Key technical outcomes
Beauty Salon Services	6	100%	All 6 mastered foundational and advanced hairdressing. Three developed comprehensive bridal service packages. Proficiency in chemical services, advanced styling and salon management.
Tie-Dye Production	5	100%	Proficiency in advanced pattern-making and natural dye techniques. Approximately 90–100 quality products, about 25% more than Batch 1, diversified into home décor and accessories.
Mobile Phone Repair	5	100%	Average of 15+ basic and 8+ advanced repairs per trainee. Three mastered micro-soldering. All proficient in software repair, system restoration and data recovery.
Tailoring	4	100%	All 4 mastered traditional Somali garments (dirac, guntiino, baati) and custom-fit garments. Two secured first clients and set up home-based tailoring operations.

Work readiness skills training

Module	Topics covered	Practical application	Outcomes achieved
Professional Communication	Workplace communication, client interaction, etiquette, conflict resolution	Role-play, mock client consultations	Improved communication and client handling

Job Search Skills	CV writing, applications, interview preparation, networking	CV development, mock interviews	All trainees developed professional CVs
Workplace Ethics	Professional conduct, workplace relationships, business ethics	Case studies, scenario analysis	Understanding of professional ethics
Financial Management	Personal finance, saving, business finance basics, record keeping	Record keeping practice, savings planning	Better financial literacy
Entrepreneurship	Business plan refinement, market identification, registration	Market research, registration guidance	Refined business plans
Mental Wellbeing & Resilience	Self-care, stress management, resilience, peer support	Group discussions, peer support sessions	Improved resilience and wellbeing awareness

All 20 trainees took part through group sessions, individual coaching and practical exercises. The component was especially valuable for trainees seeking employment, giving them the tools and confidence to navigate the job market.



An IOM monitoring visit to a Mobile Phone Repair class at AJMAL TVET.

Batch 3 1 February – August 2026 · 30 trainees · progress to June 2026

30 trainees enrolled | **50+** tie-dye products (by June) | Highest female participation

The third and largest cohort followed the same technical curriculum as Batches 1 and 2 and continued the work readiness component introduced in Batch 2.

Progress by trade

Trade	Trainees	Progress reported to June 2026
Beauty Salon Services	9	All 9 mastered foundational cutting and styling; proficiency in basic chemical services; 4 showing exceptional creativity in advanced styling.
Tie-Dye Production	10	All 10 mastered basic folding and dyeing; proficiency in advanced pattern-making; 50+ quality products produced.
Mobile Phone Repair	5	Strong understanding of device architecture across brands; 8+ basic repairs each with high success rate; developing board-level repair skills.
Tailoring	6	All 6 proficient in machine operation and maintenance; 3–4 complete basic garments each to professional standard; custom-fit skills emerging.

Work readiness training

Professional communication, job search skills (all 30 trainees developing CVs), workplace ethics and financial literacy were delivered by June 2026, with interview preparation, networking, entrepreneurship and mental wellbeing scheduled for July – August.

3.3 Training monitoring, assessment and certification

AJMAL TVET Training Centre applied a comprehensive monitoring framework across all three batches to track progress, quality and outcomes, ensuring high training standards and appropriate support for every trainee.

01 Pre-training profiling and assessment

02 Pre-training test

03 Monthly training progress reports

04 Daily attendance monitoring

05 Participant profiles tracking demographics and inclusion

06 On-site monitoring visits

07 Trainer feedback sessions

08 Formative and summative assessments

3.4 Training graduation

Graduation ceremonies were led by IOM as lead agency, with READO and AJMAL as implementing partners for TVET programming. Each ceremony marked a cohort's completion and formally recognized trainees' achievements through certificates, providing recognition of acquired competencies and enhancing graduates' employability.



A graduate receives a certificate of completion from AJMAL TVET.



An IOM representative presents a certificate at the graduation ceremony.

3.5 Post-training entrepreneurship support

Post-training entrepreneurship support was coordinated by READO under IOM's strategic leadership, with AJMAL contributing through referrals, data sharing and technical support. AJMAL's role included:

- Sharing graduate profiles and skill assessments to enable targeted business advisory support.
- Taking part in regular coordination meetings to align training and post-training activities.
- Referring all graduates to READO for entrepreneurship support.
- Providing technical consultation to graduates as they set up their businesses.

Graduates received financial and non-financial support — business advisory, start-up kits, savings group formation, market linkages and mentorship — which contributed to strong self-employment outcomes across all trades.

Batch	Graduates	Self-employment established	Self-employment rate
Batch 1 (Mar – Jul 2025)	20	8	40%
Batch 2 (Aug 2025 – Jan 2026)	20	9	45%
Batch 3 (Feb – Aug 2026)	To be tracked after graduation		
Total (Batches 1–2)	**40**	**17**	**43%**

> **17 of 40 graduates (43%)** from Batches 1 and 2 established self-employment or income-generating activities, demonstrating the effectiveness of combining technical training with structured livelihood support.



Partner representatives during a Cycle 3 project session.

SECTION 04

Participant Stories

STORY 01 · TAILORING

A new hope against all odds — Ismail Mohamed

Ismail Mohamed, 35, is a resident of Baidoa from a modest, vulnerable household that relies on informal labour to meet daily needs. He knows first-hand the challenges faced by unskilled and unemployed people — particularly women in culturally restrictive environments that limit their economic potential.

Determined to find a path to employability, Ismail enrolled in the first cycle of the IOM TVET programme.



Ismail at a tailoring workshop at AJMAL TVET.

> *"My life changed for the better when I was accepted into the six-month competency-based Tailoring and Garment Making course at Ajmal Technical TVET Center, supported by IOM through KOICA funding. The training not only equipped me with practical tailoring skills but also helped me build the capacity needed to pursue decent employment."*



Ismail at work in his own tailoring business in Baidoa.

Ismail has since transitioned to self-employment by opening his own tailoring business, and now earns a sustainable income in Baidoa's labour market.

He expresses heartfelt gratitude to IOM, KOICA and the TVET initiative for the opportunity to gain valuable skills and actively engage in the labour market.

STORY 02 · MOBILE PHONE REPAIR

"The training is a blessing to my life" — Fahad Ali Abdalla

Fahad Ali Abdalla, 26, was born in Baidoa and comes from a family of five — his mother and four siblings. He left primary school because his family could not afford fees; they depended on his mother's small petty-trading income, which did not cover basic needs.

> *"When I dropped out of school, I worked as a Bajaaj driver to support my family. I worked the whole day driving from road to road in the streets of Baidoa to make ends meet, but the payment was not enough."*



Fahad (foreground) gaining practical experience in mobile device repair at AJMAL TVET.

He chose mobile phone repair because it is in demand in the labour market and he aims to work independently:

> *"I want to thank my trainers and the sponsoring agencies for how far I have come. I have gained practical technical skills in mobile repair. I now have marketable work skills and core skills that will help me enter the job market with full confidence."*

STORY 03 · TIE-DYE PRODUCTION

Tie-dye training ended joblessness — Maryan Mohamed Ibrahim

Maryan Mohamed Ibrahim, 26, from Baidoa's host community, faced prolonged unemployment and limited opportunities before enrolling in the tie-dye course at AJMAL TVET. Initially uncertain about her potential, she gained confidence and skill through the guidance of dedicated instructors, mastering a range of tie-dye techniques and learning to mix dyes for fabric production.



Maryan during a practical session at AJMAL TVET.



Maryan at her textile business in Baidoa town.

Maryan set out to become self-reliant and lift her family out of poverty by launching her own business. Today she runs a textile business in Baidoa town. She thanks READO, IOM, AJMAL TVET Center and the donors who made this opportunity possible.

STORY 04 · BEAUTY SALON SERVICES

Beauty salon skills made a champion — Khadija Abdirahman

Khadija Abdirahman, 24, from Baidoa's host community, had endured a long period of unemployment and earned only a modest income working in a restaurant before enrolling in the beauty and salon course at AJMAL TVET.

Beauty work had always been her dream. She never missed a class and made steady progress, and the course reignited her ambition to own a business and achieve financial independence.

Khadija is particularly skilled in hairdressing, henna design and makeup application, and plans to open her own beauty salon in Baidoa. She thanks AJMAL TVET, READO for literacy and numeracy classes, and IOM and KOICA for their support.



Khadija during a beauty salon practical lesson at AJMAL TVET.

SECTION 05

Training in Pictures

Hands-on practical sessions across the four vocational trades form the foundation of trainees' transition to sustainable livelihoods.



Tie-Dye trainees practising advanced pattern-making and dyeing.



Mobile Phone Repair trainees performing hardware diagnostics on real devices.



A Tailoring trainee working on an industrial sewing machine.



Tie-Dye trainees preparing fabric for dyeing.



Beauty Salon trainees practising bridal and event styling.



Mobile Phone Repair trainees on software installation exercises.

SECTION 06

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Challenge	What happened	Lesson / recommendation
High illiteracy	High illiteracy among selected trainees affected effective participation in sessions.	Run a phased programme: foundational literacy courses first, followed by TVET training, rather than both at once.
Low IDP youth participation	Limited engagement from internally displaced youth restricted their participation.	Deliberately include IDP youth who show the interest and commitment to benefit.
Short training schedule	Training two days per week limited coverage of both practical and theoretical content.	Increase training duration for comprehensive coverage.
Household responsibilities	Some trainees, particularly women who married early or come from child-headed households, had limited availability due to caregiving and family obligations.	Use flexible scheduling to accommodate female trainees.
Transport costs	Many trainees travel long distances and could not afford transport, leading to late arrivals.	Provide transportation allowances to secure consistent attendance.
Security incidents	Periodic security incidents in Baidoa temporarily suspended activities and disrupted some sessions.	—
Limited livelihood opportunities	Market constraints challenged sustainable economic reintegration.	Extend coordination to development agencies and private sector cooperatives to widen opportunities for graduates.



Beauty Salon trainees practising during a practical session at AJMAL TVET.

SECTION 07

Planned Priorities for the Next Period

The remaining project period (to January 2027) will focus on the following priorities.

01
Complete Batch 3 training and graduation

02
Strengthen post-training support and tracking for all graduates

03
Institutional capacity building for AJMAL TVET Centre

04
Expand private sector engagement and employment linkages

05
End-of-project evaluation and learning documentation

Batch 3 completion plan

Activity	Description	Timeline	Responsible
Complete technical skills training	Deliver remaining modules and practical sessions for all four trades	Jul – Aug 2026	Trade trainers
Complete work readiness training	Interview preparation, networking, entrepreneurship and mental wellbeing	Jul – Aug 2026	Work readiness trainer
Conduct final assessments	Practical examinations, theory tests and portfolio reviews	Aug 2026	Training manager, trainers
Prepare certification	Compile results; prepare and validate certificates	Aug 2026	Administrative staff
Graduation ceremony	Ceremony with partners, community leaders and families	End Aug 2026	Project manager
Document graduate profiles	Update graduate database with final results and contacts	Aug 2026	Project officer

SECTION 08

Annexes

A1	Batch-wise monthly training progress reports
A2	Batch-wise training attendance sheets
A3	Batch-wise training participant profiles
A4	Post-training tracking summary (Batches 1 and 2)
A5	Photos and visual documentation
A6	Training curricula and monthly lesson plans
A7	Batch-wise formative and summative assessment results

AJMAL
TECHNICAL TRAINING INSTITUTE(TVET)

Building Skills. Creating Opportunity. Transforming Lives.

Address	AJMAL TVET Office, Baidoa, Somalia
Phone	+252 61 426 0390 · +252 61 507 6472
Email	info@ajmaltvet.com
Website	www.ajmaltvet.com

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