

## CEI and PPIE Advisory Board Meeting Report

**Dated:** 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**Mode:** Online (Zoom)

### Participants

#### CEI Team Members

1. Dr. Saima Aleem
2. Asad Ullah
3. Saara Khan
4. Rida Zarkaish
5. Ihtisham ul Haq
6. Tuba Khan
7. Dr. Kanwal Safeer
8. Sania Abdul Jalil

#### PPIE Advisory Board Members

1. Ammara Iqbal
2. Agha Shireen
3. Farman Khan
4. Asad Ullah Safi

### Meeting Agenda

1. Overview of forthcoming CEI activities
2. Review of changes in CEI content
3. Introduction of new sites: Mardan and Abbottabad districts
4. Discussion on strategies for the smooth conduction of activities
5. Identification and discussion of the target population
6. Collection of feedback and suggestions from advisory board members

### Introduction

The Community Engagement and Involvement (CEI) team convened an online meeting with members of the PPIE Advisory Board on 26 June 2025. The primary objective of the meeting was to review progress under the CONTROL Programme, with a focus on community engagement activities, updates in educational content, and planned expansion to new districts. Mr. Asad Ullah, representing the CEI team, provided a comprehensive overview and led the discussion on all agenda points. The feedback and recommendations from the CEI team and

advisory board members were obtained to improve the relevance, reach, and impact of future community-based interventions.

## **1. Overview of forthcoming CEI activities**

The CEI team presented an overview of the recently conducted awareness sessions in Tehkal, Peshawar. These sessions targeted communities living close to the Kuwait Teaching Hospital, where a CONTROL site is operational. The outreach activities were conducted in culturally appropriate male and female hujras to ensure inclusive participation. The sessions successfully engaged both Afghan refugees and local community members, reflecting diverse representation.

The primary purpose of these sessions was to raise awareness about tuberculosis (TB), its symptoms, prevention strategies, and the availability of treatment at CONTROL sites. Mental health topics, especially conditions often associated with TB such as depression and anxiety, were also addressed. The team acknowledged that due to time limitations, a preparatory meeting with advisory board members was not held before the Tehkal events.

The forthcoming CEI sessions will take place in Khalabut, Haripur, on 28 June 2025, including targeted outreach in Afghan refugee camps and local community sessions. The focal person is already engaged in making arrangements for these activities.

## **2. Review of Recent CEI Activities**

The CEI team presented an overview of the recently conducted awareness sessions in Tehkal, Peshawar. These sessions targeted communities living near the Kuwait Teaching Hospital, where a CONTROL site is operational. The outreach activities were conducted in culturally appropriate male and female hujras to ensure inclusive participation. The sessions successfully engaged both Afghan refugees and local community members, reflecting diverse representation.

The primary purpose of these sessions was to raise awareness about tuberculosis (TB), its symptoms, prevention strategies, and the availability of treatment at CONTROL sites. The team acknowledged that due to time limitations, a preparatory meeting with advisory board members was not held before the Tehkal events. However, they emphasized that lessons learned from these sessions would inform future planning.

## **3. Updates in CEI Content and Materials**

During the meeting, the CEI team shared revisions made to the community session content to enhance clarity and effectiveness. These included:

- Introduction of information on Multi-Drug Resistant TB (MDR-TB) to raise community awareness about more complex forms of TB.
- Inclusion of a visual aid, specifically an awareness video developed during a previous pilot project, intended to reinforce key messages and improve community retention of information.
- Updated referral information pointing to nearby TB diagnostic and treatment centers affiliated with the CONTROL Programme, ensuring that participants are not only informed but also directed to appropriate services.

#### 4. Strategic Planning for New CEI Sites

The team announced that CEI activities will soon be launched in two newly identified locations: **Mardan** and **Abbottabad** districts. Initial steps discussed for engaging these areas included:

- Identifying local focal persons and community influencers to facilitate outreach
- Mapping target populations and community entry points
- Coordinating with local health facilities where CONTROL interventions are present
- Securing necessary administrative approvals before commencing any field activities

It was emphasized that **No Objection Certificates (NOCs)** must be obtained from local authorities, including the new sites i.e., Peshawar, Haripur, Abbottabad, and Mardan, to ensure formal approval and institutional support for upcoming interventions.

#### 5. Strategic Shift in Community Engagement

A significant part of the discussion highlighted a strategic shift in the CEI approach. Previously, CEI activities focused primarily on raising awareness. Moving forward, the focus will shift towards active community mobilization. This will involve:

- Proactively engaging community members in identifying suspected TB cases
- Encouraging referrals to CONTROL sites for mental health assessments
- Promoting the integration of TB and mental health services in a more visible and accessible manner

## 6. Suggestions from the Advisory Board

Advisory board members and CEI team members shared several practical suggestions to enhance the impact of CEI efforts:

- **School-Based Engagement**

Dr. Saima Aleem proposed organizing activities such as poster competitions and interactive discussions within schools. This approach would not only educate students about TB and mental health but also engage parents and families through children's participation, extending awareness beyond the classroom.

- **Religious Involvement**

Agha suggested incorporating religious perspectives into CEI messaging. Collaborating with local religious leaders such as imams could help reduce stigma, increase acceptance, and promote service uptake. It was recommended to organize sessions in mosques or use Friday prayer gatherings as outreach opportunities.

- **Inclusive Outreach to Minority Groups**

Sara emphasized the importance of inclusivity in CEI activities. She recommended that sessions also be held in locations such as churches and community centers to engage minority and underserved groups who might otherwise be left out of mainstream programming.

- **Market-Based Awareness Activities**

Dr. Saima Aleem also recommended expanding outreach to local marketplaces and engaging traders. Since these settings attract large and diverse crowds, they offer a strategic platform for sharing information and encouraging dialogue on TB and mental health services.

## 7. Conclusion

The meeting provided a comprehensive review of CEI efforts and laid out the direction for future engagement. The shift towards active mobilization and feedback from the advisory board

will guide future planning and implementation. Suggestions such as school-based engagement, religious involvement, and market outreach were recognized as feasible and impactful.

