

# Translating Information – Targeting Communities

Issues to consider



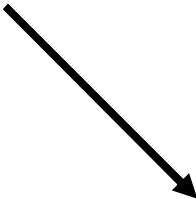
Consultation



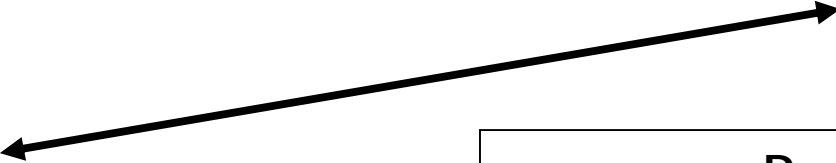
Plans



Pitfalls



Processes



Protocols



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**Identify first whether your material should be translated and in what languages. Issues to consider:**

## IDENTIFY

- Ø Who is your target group? Young people, older people, men, women, children, low literacy, professionals, general community;
  - Ø Identify what language group accesses your services the most and what for;
  - Ø What is your message?
  - Ø Identify whether service delivery is being affected by language or literacy issue?
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- Ø If you identify that it is a literacy issue, then a different approach to what is being presented is required;
  - Ø Simplifying the format, presentation, text (plain English), using images, drawings or symbols might be more appropriate. Either way follow appropriate consultation with community representatives and department staff to be sure. If you only consult with staff, they might not be aware of the differences between literacy or language issues;

## Answer these questions before you begin

Ø Is the information relevant to your customer ?

Ø How will it be useful to you / your customer?

Ø Why do you want to target this customer?

Ø Is it Appropriate for this type of customer?

Ø Is it Accessible to this type of customer?

## CONSULTATION – ESSENTIAL!!!!

### INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

- Ø Interview staff: collect case studies about their experiences they have had in servicing this group. This will ensure that the content of the information you choose to get translated is relevant, appropriate and useful for both staff and clients;
- Ø Consult with community representatives about their issues and experiences in accessing your services;
- Ø Ensure you take into consideration both perspectives before deciding on the content of your brochure;

If you are restricted by a lack of resources or time, organise a meeting with officers from the department producing the translated information. Staff will often already have issues stored away in their heads from past experiences or cases they may already be aware of. Alternatively, contact MSS or the CCC LAMP officer who can provide advice and access to community representatives who you can consult.

## BE AWARE!!!

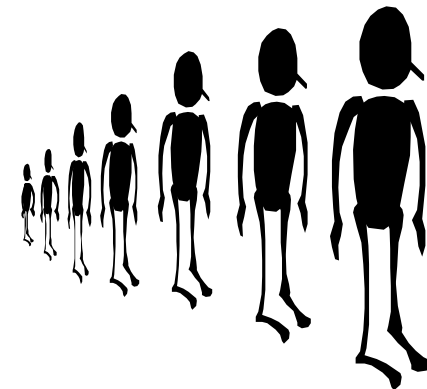
It is always tempting to simply translate information you have already developed and have been producing for a while. It may have been well received and useful to both your staff and general public. Check the English version with community representatives first to be sure. However there are some assumptions that might not fit the needs of the target group:



**ASSUMPTION #1:** If it's useful and appropriate for the general English speaking public, it should be easy enough to translate.

**NOT NECESSARILY:** This depends on the level of English and target audience. Long detailed descriptions, academic, technical or jargon English is sometimes difficult or impossible to translate accurately. Informal and simple English text is the best and most appropriate to submit for translation.

If you believe that the information is already simplified, it is still a good idea to consult with a community representative to get their feedback. You might be surprised as to what you think is basic English as to what is actually perceived by a person who has English as a second language.



**ASSUMPTION # 2:** Ok so simplify the English version, but still keep the format the same.

**NOT NECESSARILY:** Format and presentation is actually quite important. If your English version has not incorporated visual images, or symbols to break up the text, and if the text is too small, all the information may not be read by the client. More is not necessarily better. Short, sharp and straight is the best approach. Use images that reflect the target group when possible and at least 12 font;



# 10 important steps to follow when translating documents



1. Develop a brief project outline, budget and timeframe for the desired completion of your translation project. This will be affected by the word count of your document and diversity of languages you want to translate. Submit all your information at one time and ensure that English version is proof read before submitting to translator;
2. Plain English document is prepared for translation in consultation with stakeholders (target group / management) and submitted to translating agency;
3. If you are translating a document in a language with characters and are not sure whether your computer system can recognise them, ask the translating agency to email you character translations on a PDF file. Alternatively, an agency will accept a laser copy that they can scan. CD's might still not be recognised if the software is incompatible. Always discuss formatting issues with the publishing agency



4. All translated documents should go through a community checking (CC) process to ensure that the translation reflects the local community language. Be sure to budget for this in your project plan. This process is very sensitive because accredited translators do not always reflect local dialects or regional languages. For example, Spanish from Spain is very different from South American or Caribbean Spanish. A CC will also be able to pick up spelling or grammar mistakes.

Ideally the CC consultation process should only happen twice.

- Ø Once after the translating agency (TA) returns the translation to you the first time to be checked. If the CC recommends changes, this then is returned to the translating agency with comments about the reason for the changes.
- Ø The TA returns the second version to you, which should be checked again by the CC again to be sure the changes have been made;
- Ø If there is still a debate over the translation discuss the reasons with agency and CC. At this stage, it may have been an oversight or a writing style issue.



## Working with Community Checkers (CC)

5. Ensure total anonymity between translators and community checkers;
6. CC must be provided with guidelines and comments sheet to note any mistakes or corrections;
7. Document is submitted to the CC and is returned to the translating agency with comments of community checker. Ensure that the CC has given a verbal and written reason for changing any text; (allow one extra week at least for this step);
8. Document is returned and checked a second time with a CC. If there are still corrections, submit the changes to the translating agency with comments and reason for corrections again;
9. Document is submitted again and checked over a third time;
10. Document should be ready for publication;
11. Distribute the translated publication to the relevant audience and departments;

## 6 Potential Pitfalls ( I'm sure there are more!!!)



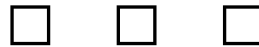
### Indigenous Languages

1. It may be difficult to work with some non-accredited languages such as Pacific Islander Indigenous, Australian Indigenous, or Hmong languages. Many of these languages are recognised but not accredited and translators are not adequately trained at this level but are acceptable as translators nonetheless.
2. Aboriginal Creole or English for example changes by region. Community consultation is important, but be aware consensus may be difficult to reach. Try to consult with agencies in the community who have done this before and get advice first.

**Extra time should be allowed for such languages.**

## Character Languages

ต้องการความช่วยเหลือ?



3. Formatting problems and incompatible software of languages with characters (Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Thai) may affect the quality of a translation. Check with your IT people whether your system can receive character languages. Try to ask for PDF files from the agency to avoid this problem.

## Community Checkers

4. The Community checking (CC) process is a critical step in ensuring accuracy and may take more time than anticipated (depending on word count of document, language, and diversity of languages), up to four total community checks may be required;



### English language cannot always be translated word for word

5. English language does not always translate directly word for word into another language. Sometimes there is NO translation for an English word into another language. If this is the case, a word that cannot be directly translated, may instead be described. As long as the message has not been lost, the translation is acceptable.

## **Potential conflict between community checkers advice on professional translators version.**

6. If there continues to be a disagreement between the community checker and the professional translator (or agency representative), the safest path to take is to have the CC verbally explain to you their reason for the disagreement with the translators version. Once you have established this, consult with your department manager. The important issue is that you choose the translation that reflects the closest description to the English version you have provided.

## **Never use non-accredited interpreters for important information or any type of legal document!!!!**

7. Even if you have budgetary restrictions, and as tempting as it may be, **never** use family, staff or community members to translate any documents that may lead to a legal dispute or will be publicly distributed. This may be acceptable only if you know that the staff or community member is fluent in both languages and only for simple, and short texts. However, the general rule is to always use accredited / professional translators for most situations. Using accredited translators can protect you if a legal dispute arise

## **Titles ( same advice applies to working with interpreters)**

8. Be aware that in the technical sense a “translator or an interpreter” are generally assumed to be professionally accredited.

### **Make it clear when using this term to describe their status**

- Ø “non-accredited translator or interpreter”
- Ø “Recognised,
- Ø or in the CCC case we have used “Language Assistance Volunteers” (LAV).

This may protect your organisation from any legal action if a problem arises that may lead to court. Meaning if you are not able to access a professional translator to translate a document on the spot, you should make this statement as a disclaimer and advise or make arrangements for a professional translator to assist at a later time.

In the CCC case, LAV can only assist in the case of ‘informal enquires’ where clients are only asking for directions, time, dates, appointments, location of events, addresses or general information. In this case a non-accredited interpreter is useful and acceptable;

## **REFERENCES:**

Queensland Government Language Services Policy

Translating and Interpreting Services – DIMIA

Getting Your Message Across – Brisbane City Council

Breakingthrough Australia

LAMP- Camp- Presentation by Brisbane City Council – Gladstone, Qld 2002