



Humanitarian Interpreting

ELTE, Budapest
Barbara Moser-Mercer

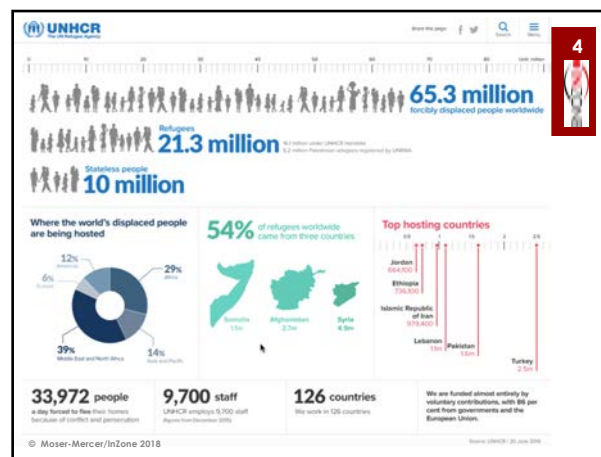
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2

CONFLICT



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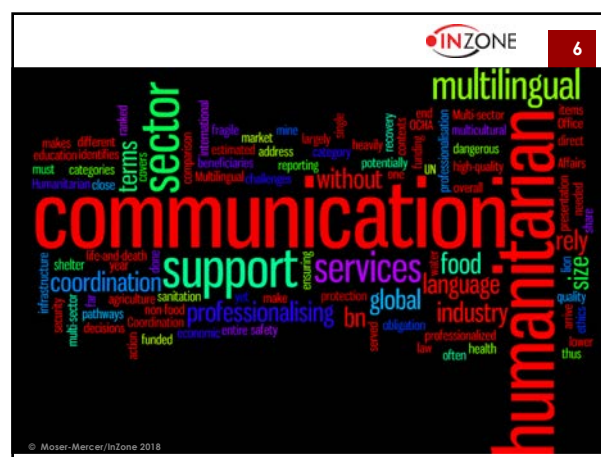


Language diversity

Amharic, Oromo, Somali, Tigrinya, Nuer, Dinka, Arabic, Darfuri, Mai Mai, Burundi, Kiswahili, Kibembe, Lingala, Acholi, Pari, Murle, Diding'a, Massalit, Moro, Tenet, Juba Arabic, Toposa, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Tira, Bare, Kuku, Lotuko, Walaita, French, English, Dari, Pashtu, Kinyamulenge, Anyuak, Afaan, Bare, Tira, Lopi, Tigre, Bilen, Kunama, Saho, Zaghawa

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The context

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The context

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The framework: Human rights law, Humanitarian law, Refugee law

Humanitarian principles

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Humanitarian principles

- **Humanity:** Addressing human suffering wherever it is found
- **Neutrality:** Providing assistance without taking sides
- **Impartiality:** Providing assistance without discrimination
- **Do no/less harm:** Minimize harm that may be done through process of delivering assistance
- **Accountability** to beneficiary communities and donors
- **Participation:** Realizing the right of affected populations to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- **Respect for culture and custom:** Providing assistance with due sensitivity and respect for the culture and customs of beneficiaries

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How can we hear the voices of disaster/conflict-affected populations?

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Communication challenges

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Humanitarians' comments on interpreting

- Oh, the interpreter was also my driver and my security guard
- You know, I never thought about interpreting
- We just used the closest person with language skills
- I understand a little bit of Swahili, you have no idea how many times the interpreter mistranslated messages

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Humanitarian Interpreting

Humanitarian interpreting is the activity performed by interpreters when working for organizations with a humanitarian mandate (e.g. International Committee of the Red Cross-ICRC, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees-UNHCR, Médecins sans Frontières-MSF, Save the Children).

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Humanitarian Interpreting

As a training provider, InZone identifies the following characteristics as defining humanitarian interpreters:

- **Fragility of operational environments:** e.g. conflict and post-conflict contexts, refugee camps, urban refugee settings, contexts falling within the scope of application of International Humanitarian Law, human rights and refugee law
- **Interpreting in situations of human suffering** (in pursuit of the missions of the humanitarian organizations with which they work), including visits (detention, field-hospitals), interviews (victims of conflict, refugee status determination, etc.)
- **Beneficiaries of their services:** persons often identified as protected under International Humanitarian Law, e.g. children, women, civilians, detainees, refugees, displaced, wounded or sick persons
- **Absence of occupational structure:** no institutionalized professional community/association or established code of professional ethics.

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Who we are, what we do - Mission



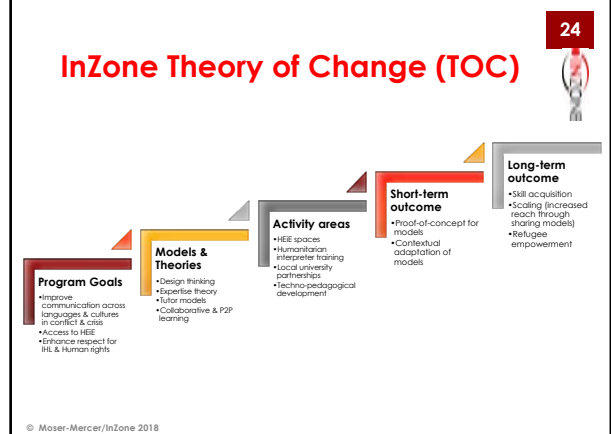
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Pioneering innovative approaches to Higher Education and Multilingual communication in communities affected by conflict and crisis

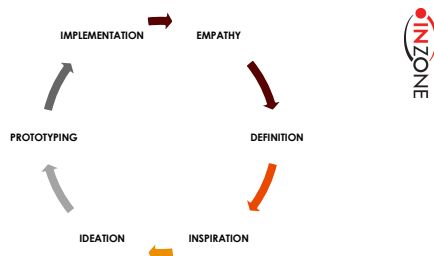


InZone Theory of Change (TOC)



We use Design Thinking to implement our ToC

25



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DESIGN THINKING

26



- **EMPATHY:** Humanitarian communication in the field – the last mile – faces complex challenges that communities marked by conflict have difficulty resolving peacefully
- **DEFINITION:** Humanitarian interpreters develop skill sets to peaceful mediation between parties in conflict
- **INSPIRATION:** Collecting tough cases of multilingual and multicultural humanitarian communication in the field allows us to gain deep insights into some of the causes of conflict and maladaptive communication behaviors
- **IDEATION:** Learner-centered pedagogical approaches encourage learners (trainees) to generate and then
- **PROTOTYPING:** experiment with positive approaches to humanitarian communication and test whether they are feasible before
- **IMPLEMENTATION:** putting them into practice, M&E and validating them scientifically

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What makes humanitarian interpreting difficult?

27



1. Language and culture (diversity and lack of proficiency)
2. Ethics / role of the interpreter (power relations, role definition, rapid decision-making)
3. Emotionally charged discourse (compassion fatigue, PTSD, psycho-social well-being)

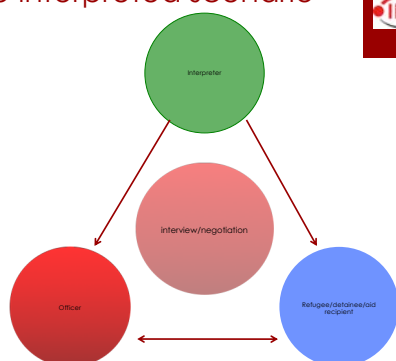
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Communication triangle of the interpreted scenario

29



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Ethics and the role of the humanitarian interpreter



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31



Interpreters' code of ethics Key concepts

- Neutrality
- Impartiality
- Confidentiality
- Integrity
- Respect
- Fidelity/accuracy

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32



Ethics dilemma: Tough Case Description

An interpreter working for a humanitarian organisation was assigned to work with a certain officer in the field. After working together for a while the interpreter learned that the officer takes bribes from some of his clients in exchange for their entitled humanitarian service.

This was shocking to the interpreter and she wanted to talk to the officer to remind him that the beneficiaries are entitled to receive the service free of charge and that taking bribes was unacceptable. However, the interpreter did not dare to do so as the officer was her boss.

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Ethics dilemma: Case Analysis

- The interpreter experiences a serious dilemma
- The interpreter reports to this officer as her supervisor and this job is her only livelihood
- The officer is a powerful officer in the organisation.



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Strategies for Ethical Decision-Making

"In that case, the interpreter needs to approach higher managerial officials in the organisation and inform them about the conduct of the officer and what he is doing in the field (corruption). Should the interpreter fear for her safety, she needs to discuss with the officials on possible mechanisms that could facilitate an investigation without her identity being disclosed."

Conclusion: "By doing this, the interpreter has taken a hard and ethical decision to recommit herself to the principles of humanity and the Do-no-Harm. Since she is associated as humanitarian interpreter with this officer acting inappropriately, the interpreter should not allow any behaviours that contravenes humanitarian standards and victimises beneficiaries."

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Ethics dilemma: Tough Case Description

In the aftermath of the war, you are assigned as an interpreter for a humanitarian organization that is helping people to resettle. You are the only interpreter in the area and among people that you are serving comes the person who persecuted you during the war.

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Ethics dilemma: Case Analysis

- The interpreter is emotionally disturbed but needs his job
- The client is also emotionally disturbed but needs help
- The humanitarian worker does not know what is going on
- The interpreter needs to take a quick decision



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Strategies for Ethical Decision-Making

37



"The humanitarian principle of impartiality needs to be applied whereby the interpreter is not supposed to take part in any kind of hostility. Our interpreter here is expected not to use his position to get revenge on the person who persecuted him. As an ethical decision, the interpreter can choose to overcome his emotions and interpret for the person in need or decide to let the humanitarian worker know his situation and get another interpreter for that specific client."



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Code of ethics – Key concepts and concerns

(UNHCR)

38

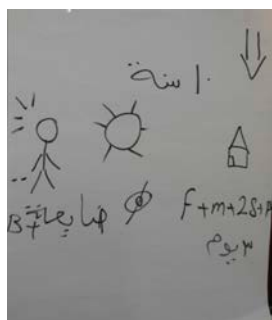


- **Neutrality:** Client wants interpreter to help (advocacy)
- **Impartiality:** Officer or Interpreter being from a different religion or tribe or ethnic group – Interpreter may feel animosity
- **Confidentiality:** Relative of client pressing the Interpreter for information about content of interview and decision-making; fear of retribution upon return to community
- **Respect:** Client insulting Interpreter or Officer- how does Interpreter interpret the insult and how does the Officer react?
- **Integrity:**
 - **Dialects** – Interpreter does not admit that s/he is not fully competent; client tries to cover up geographic origin
 - **Skills** – overstating level of skill
- **Fidelity/accuracy:** saying no more – no less of what client or Officer are saying; clearly identifying additional cultural information as coming from Interpreter

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Virtual and blended learning

39



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40



Learning by doing...

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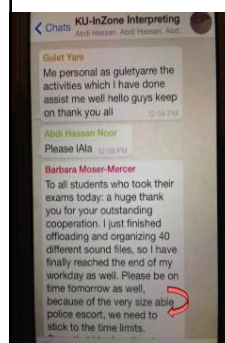


41

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Communication with students in real-time - WhatsApp

42



Exams in Dadaab – in the immediate aftermath of Garissa



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Connecting Kakuma and Azraq camps

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Virtual tutoring from one Refugee camp to another

Message Log:

Tatari Mousselem
Hi, everyone . 11:55 PM

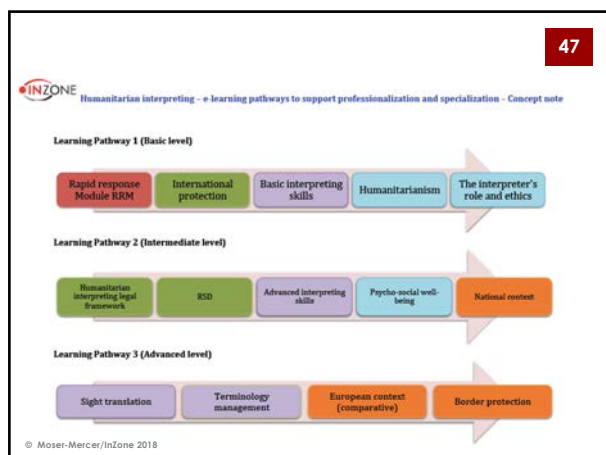
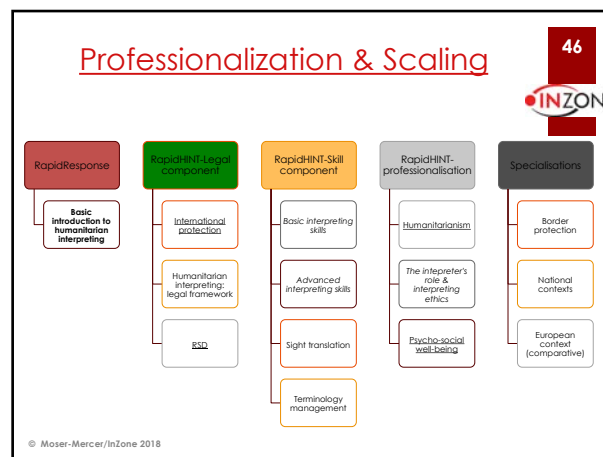
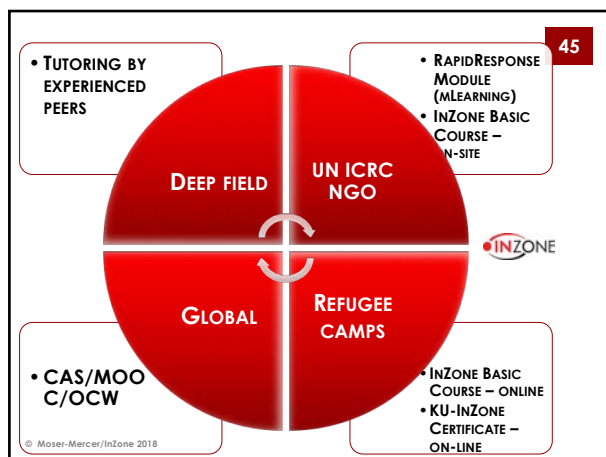
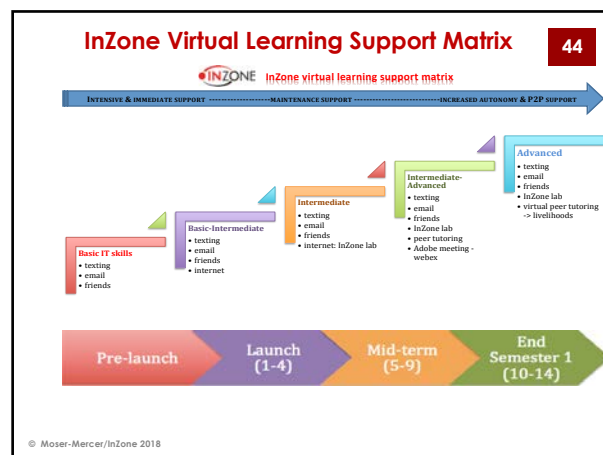
Monday

Owain Almarasour
Hello Ahmad,
Hiyam sent me the notes for activity 3 part1 and I have just upload it on the website. 2:53 PM

The other thing is that Muteeb has submitted his assignment for activity 4 but it seems there is something wrong the file doesn't open.
If it is not working with you let me know. 2:55 PM

+962 7 9724 3392
I have a question consenring the activity 5:
In the platform it starts on 22/3 and ends on 5th of April but we supposed to do it by 25th of March as asked Mr.Ahmad

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Learning outcomes RRM (EQF level 1/2)

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Basic understanding of roles, skillset, tools of professional humanitarian interpreters	Basic grasp of professional expectations, cultural issues and ethics	Increased awareness of self-care and psychosocial aspects
Language combination Language proficiency Active listening The triad/position Use of the first person singular Note-taking Glossary making Reformulation of the message	Ethics principles (neutrality, confidentiality, accuracy, transparency, setting boundaries) Cultural differences Nonverbal communication	Interpreting-specific stress factors Warning signs of stress Coping strategies Resiliency Moral efficacy


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Learning outcomes Basic Course for HINT (EQF level 3/4)

Intermediate understanding of roles, intermediate skillset, tools of professional humanitarian interpreters	Intermediate grasp of professional expectations, cultural issues and ethics	Intermediate skills of self-care and psychosocial aspects
Language combination Language proficiency Active listening The triad position Use of the first person singular Note-taking Glossary making Reformulation of the message	Ethics principles (neutrality, confidentiality, accuracy, transparency, setting boundaries) Cultural differences Nonverbal communication	Interpreting-specific stress factors Warning signs of stress Coping strategies Resiliency Moral efficacy

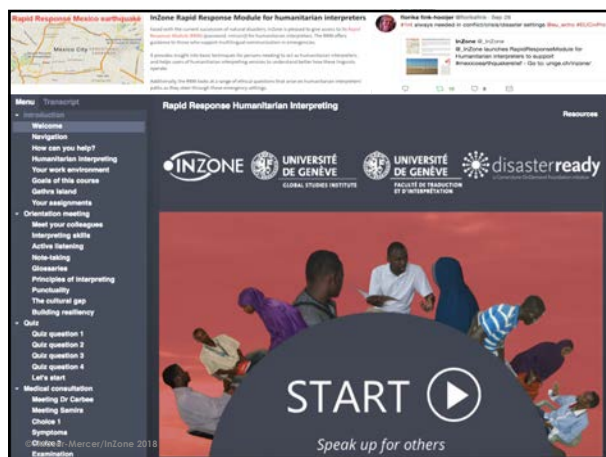
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Learning outcomes CAS HINT (Certificate in Advanced Studies) (EQF level 6)

Professional understanding of roles, professional skillset, tools of professional humanitarian interpreters	Professional understanding of humanitarian context, IHL, cultural issues and ethics, complete humanitarian competency skills (sector knowledge and skills)	Knowledge & skills regarding self-care and psychosocial aspects
Language combination Language proficiency Active listening The triad position Advanced note-taking Glossary management Preparation of professional guidance documents	Ethics principles (neutrality, confidentiality, accuracy, transparency, setting boundaries) IHL Human Rights Humanitarian competency skills (Sphere, GoodEnoughGuide, etc.) Cultural differences Nonverbal communication	Interpreting-specific stress factors Warning signs of stress Liaising with IO & NGO experts Coping strategies Resiliency Moral efficacy


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INZONE Rapid Response Module for Humanitarian Interpreters

START 

Speak up for others



Structure

Principles of interpreting

Be careful

Codes of conduct

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English, Gathran & Dareeran



Done

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Validating our models (M&E and Scientific validation)

INSIGHTS FROM THE UNHCR I, II AND V BASIC COURSES IN NAIROBI

Qualitative evaluation report and recommendations for action

Carmen Delgado Luchner
October 2015

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