Beyond aid: Sustainable responses to meeting language communication needs in humanitarian contexts

Barbara Moser-Mercer
University of Geneva, Switzerland; University of Nairobi, Kenya

Somia Qudah
Mona Nabeel Ali Malkawi
Yarmouk University, Jordan

Jayne Mutiga
University of Nairobi, Kenya

Mohammed Al-Batineh
Yarmouk University, Jordan; Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

Abstract
This article navigates the complexity of the humanitarian system, the potential of the humanitarian-development nexus, and the commitments of the World Humanitarian Summit of 2016 as a backdrop to designing sustainable interpreter training programmes. It argues that these programmes must be locally designed to respond to real needs and developed and implemented by local actors living and working in the contexts where building trained interpreter capacity is essential to the success of the humanitarian agenda. It further highlights the crucial importance of decolonising aid and empowering local actors in efforts to advance the cause and quality of multilingual communication in crisis situations.
contexts. Two case studies from conflict-affected regions in the Middle East and East Africa—Jordan and Kenya—illustrate how cross-cutting issues from national, regional and international politics, humanitarian agendas, international aid, Higher Education in Emergencies, and country-specific policy agendas inform the design, development, and implementation of university-level training programmes in humanitarian interpreting.

Keywords
decolonising aid, Grand Bargain, humanitarian assistance, humanitarian interpreting

Introduction

In humanitarian, conflict, post-conflict/early recovery and protracted refugee contexts, communication is key to ensuring coordination of relief operations, the provision of essential services related to WASH (water-sanitation-health), protection, food security and Education in Emergencies (EiE), whether within the borders of countries in crisis or in those hosting the forcibly displaced. Through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), emergency relief is organised in clusters led by international agencies working together in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Support is provided by humanitarian country teams and the complexity of these operations, often attempting to meet the needs of hundreds of thousands of civilians, requires reliable communication. Similarly, civilians fleeing conflict and arriving in host countries need to be provided with support to care for their basic needs, to process their registration and applications for refugee status, and to obtain basic social services. Ideally, trained interpreters should support communication in these settings. In times of conflict, post-conflict and protracted displacement settings, however, they are either unavailable, or they are not available in sufficient numbers to deal with the urgent and numerous demands for their services (Federici & O’Brien, 2019). Globally, the number of forced migrants stands at around 80 million (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2020a), and conflict, natural disasters, and climate change seem likely to contribute to a steady increase in the years to come.

In what follows, we attempt to navigate the complexity of the humanitarian system, the potential of the humanitarian-development nexus, and the commitments of the World Humanitarian Summit of 2016 with regard to sustainable interpreter training programmes that are locally designed to respond to real needs, and developed and implemented by local actors living and working in the contexts where trained interpreter capacity is essential to people’s enjoyment of human rights, equal access to services and to regaining control over their lives and livelihoods. While previous contributions to the emerging specialisation of humanitarian interpreting have focused more narrowly on active conflict settings and the role of the interpreter (Delgado-Luchner & Kherbiche, 2018; Footitt & Kelly, 2012; Inghilleri, 2010; Orlando, 2016; Ruiz Rosendo & Persaud, 2016), our contribution seeks to position humanitarian interpreting as part of the humanitarian programming cycle from disaster preparedness to recovery, and thus broaden its use considerably beyond active conflict settings. It also seeks to establish a context for professional training in this area to become sustainable. Third, it aims to set it within the framework of the Grand Bargain commitments to increase agency of local actors and affected populations, to return power to them over shaping contextually appropriate solutions and
sustainably increasing their countries’ disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction (DRR) (Federici & O’Brien, 2019). Finally, it aims to translate the problem-solving approach discussed in this article into a pedagogical model that is integral to crisis contexts and that encourages programme participants—who for the most part are refugees or disadvantaged host country residents—to design workable solutions that meet concrete local and national needs and thereby contribute to returning control to them over their livelihoods (Freire, 1993).

A starting point is to recognise that states hold the primary responsibility for coordinating humanitarian relief within their borders, and regional bodies such as the African Union may also coordinate supra-national responses. At the global level, the IASC sets key policy and priorities for coordinating the international response. At the intervention level, the responsibility for coordinating the international response falls upon the United Nations, in particular the Emergency Relief Coordinator and UNOCHA. While the primary responsibility for humanitarian response remains with states, for conflicts and disasters that exceed a state’s response on account of their scope and intensity, the international humanitarian system is designed to provide a coordinated response together with the needed surge capacity. However, the international system is meant to work with local responders during the crisis phase, and it is at that interface that communication needs are the most urgent and where local capacity is crucial to efficient coordination. With regard to the humanitarian programming cycle, starting with preparedness, multilingual communication needs may be at their lowest, as the responsibility for this falls to local governments. These needs increase significantly during the crisis phase and through to early recovery, as these phases often require coordination with international actors. At the same time, if local participation is to be meaningful and effective, communication with them has to be efficient. Protracted humanitarian settings and those that overlap with development (along the humanitarian-development nexus) lead to hand over to local actors again, at which time multilingual communication needs are thought to decline. However, as will be discussed below in relation to the Grand Bargain and related localisation commitments, the shift in power and responsibility has not been a hallmark of the humanitarian system. Language communication needs thus remain acute, even during protracted emergencies and into development.

The two case studies presented in this article illustrate how the international policy framework can responsibly inform quality local initiatives, with a view to strengthening local capacity for language mediation throughout the humanitarian programming cycle, including preparedness planning. These case studies—from Jordan and Kenya—depart from the traditional North-South collaboration template in higher education, as the relevant initiatives fully leverage local human and material resources to build genuine local education programmes that respond to carefully assessed local needs. Freire (1993) argues that positive results cannot be expected from an educational or political action programme which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people concerned, and that such programmes constitute cultural invasion, irrespective of whether they are guided by good intentions. For him, the starting point for organising the programme content of an education initiative must be the present, concrete situation which gives rise to the aspirations of the people. In both case studies reported here, the concrete present situation of massive forced displacement and the attendant issue of humanitarian communication were at the heart of the problem that local participants needed to solve. Freire’s contribution to empowerment theory allows us to explore and
make sense of relationships between individual actors and stakeholders within the specific social, organisational, educational, and political environments of the two refugee-hosting countries involved.

The two programmes started from somewhat different premises, given the local specificity of (1) the humanitarian contexts in which they operate; (2) the various stages of the humanitarian programming cycle in which they find themselves and which co-determine demand for language mediation; (3) the background of those entrusted with programme development and training; (4) the diversity of the student population that they serve. Both case studies illustrate locally led initiatives whose funding and initial support mechanisms were deliberately incorporated into a sustainability strategy, with the aim of making them independent of any external financing and support by the end of their respective first editions. This is a prerequisite to managing—and avoiding—the hazards of project-cycle programming that purport to build capacity but subsequently implode because of a lack of sustained external funding, an all too common phenomenon in humanitarian and development programmes. Each programme has approached this objective in a different way, in keeping with local university practice and with regard for the local employability potential of its graduates, as we explain below.

**Sustainable education programmes and legal frameworks**

We adopt a rights-based approach to communication in humanitarian settings, and reference (1) the Core Humanitarian Standard (Sphere, 2018) that sets out nine commitments to improve the quality, effectiveness, and accountability of a response; (2) the UNHCR Participatory Assessment in Operations tool (UNHCR, 2020c), which describes how persons affected by crisis can effectively participate from the outset and how this participation can be inclusive; (3) the Global Protection Cluster’s Protection Mainstreaming Toolkit (GPC, 2020), which supports mainstream protection, that is, advocating for, supporting, or undertaking activities that aim to fully respect the rights of all individuals in accordance with international humanitarian human rights and refugee law, and oversees the implementation of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees (UNHCR, 2020e). The recent publication of the Signal Code (Scarnecchia et al., 2017) emphasises the importance of information access in humanitarian contexts and cites Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to frame it within a human rights-based approach (United Nations, 1948).

Conflict and disasters tend to transcend state boundaries, and so preparedness, management, recovery, and rebuilding often require extensive trans-border, international coordination and collaboration, which are governed by different sets of laws and guidelines that complement national laws and guidelines. Understanding the interfaces between international, regional, and national guidelines and frameworks is fundamental to the development and regular updating of information, and to the relevant training of experts and volunteers called upon to support rescue and assistance operations in multilingual crisis contexts, and who need to rely on interpreters for operationalising their mandates efficiently and effectively. The summary of the legal context offered here simplifies the large number of national, regional, and international laws and regulations, whose analysis would exceed the scope of this article. The focus is on legal guidance that has been leveraged by the universities in Kenya and Jordan to advocate in favour of
setting up university-level training programmes for humanitarian interpreters and ensure that they become sustainable to help fulfil obligations their countries had entered into. Key among the latter are International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law, International Disaster Response Laws, and the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promoted the development of a complete set of International Disaster Response Laws (IDRL). Two key principles of these laws and the Model Act they propose is (1) that domestic actors have the primary role in meeting the humanitarian needs caused by a disaster, and (2) that the government of the affected state has the primary responsibility, while National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies and other domestic civil society actors play a key supporting role. When it comes to meeting multilingual communication needs during a disaster, national capacity, as developed in-country, thus appears to be clearly the first port of call—especially considering that the focus during the initial stages of a disaster, inevitably, is not on improving multilingual communication. What the Centre for Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities has pointed out so convincingly—that “[c]ommunication is aid” (CDAC, 2011)—continues to seem counterintuitive to humanitarian actors, who generally assume that local actors have an immediate understanding of language and communication needs, based on traditional and long-standing community awareness, compared with international actors arriving on the scene. Strengthening local actors’ capacity to respond, including providing them with quality language communication resources, will invariably lead to a higher quality response, both before international actors arrive and during collaboration and coordination with them. The training initiatives described in the two case studies discussed below have referenced these needs in their curricula and ensured that a variety of humanitarian topics are covered in terms of knowledge and skill-building, but that these skills can also translate into employment beyond the immediate humanitarian needs.

East Africa is especially prone to natural disasters, and disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction are considered national responsibilities (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR], 2016). According to O’Brien et al. (2018, p. 628), education initiatives intended to support disaster risk reduction need to be designed with full participation of local communities, because such an approach prevents breaches of communities’ rights and improves language access to education, preparedness, and community participation. Beyond East Africa, a 2018 survey carried out by Translators without Borders in collaboration with the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) found that disasters and conflicts affected 60 countries, 4,984 languages, and 204 million people in need (INEE & Translators without Borders, 2019). Preparing for and meeting multilingual communication needs across such a diverse spread of conflicts and languages should thus be intricately linked to the disaster risk reduction responsibility of each country and region.

Both Jordan and Kenya follow programmes and guidelines developed within the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Jordan National Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2019–2022, set up according to the Sendai Framework, emphasises the importance of local knowledge in strengthening preparedness and effective rebuilding during recovery (Jordan National Center for Security and Crisis Management, 2019). The Kenyan Disaster Management Plan focuses on local, national, and cross-border
communication and preparedness, emphasising the need for information to flow freely across linguistic boundaries. Given the multitude of languages and tribal variants in the Horn of Africa, such coordination efforts not only encounter language but also cultural barriers in respect of how local knowledge is prioritised (Government of Kenya: Ministry of State Special Programmes, 2009).

With both Kenya and Jordan hosting large numbers of refugees, their interpreter training curricula include specific modules that deal with interpreting scenarios related to the implementation of refugee law. The fundamental instrument is the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees (and the 1967 Protocols), which covers the definition of refugees, their legal status, and the obligations of states under the Convention, including their cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). As a region, Africa adopted the 1967 Protocols as well as its own Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (OAU/UN, 1969/1976). In 2012, member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (2012) adopted the Ashgabat Declaration which recognises in Article 2 that “over fourteen centuries ago, Islam laid down the basis for granting refuge, which is now deeply ingrained in Islamic faith, heritage and tradition.”

With respect to the two case studies, we see universal adherence to the principles of the 1951 Convention. Although Jordan has not signed it, the country’s documentation makes clear reference to local, regional, and national as well as faith-based principles underlying humanitarian assistance. When it comes to multilingual communication in a humanitarian context, understanding humanitarian assistance within local, regional, national, or faith-based frameworks should therefore have priority over principles and guidelines enshrined in international instruments. Such understanding would improve trust among participants in multilingual encounters and has significant potential for improving the quality of communication overall.

Communication is also a cornerstone of refugee law. According to the Procedural Standards for Refugee Status Determination (RSD) under UNHCR’s Mandate (UNHCR, 2020d), all communications between applicants and the UNHCR must take place in a language that the applicants understand and in which they are able to communicate clearly. Applicants are expected to have access to the services of trained and qualified interpreters at all stages of the RSD process, including during registration, first instance RSD, appeal, cancellation, revocation, cessation, and re-opening procedures. These services should be provided by UNHCR interpreters, that is, persons recruited by UNHCR to work as interpreters when communicating with persons of concern, as well as interpreters contracted through professional interpretation services or provided through regular arrangements with designated implementing partners.

Where no qualified UNHCR interpreters are available, UNHCR allows applicants to bring their own interpreter. Section 2.5 of the Procedural Standards provides comprehensive guidance on interpreting in a UNHCR context, including updated guidelines for remote interpreting. With close to 23,000 applications for refugee status determination pending in Kenya (UNHCR, 2020b), requiring interviews to be conducted in many African languages, a clear case can be made for training interpreters in and for Africa, and ensuring that investing in training meets established needs. A similar case can be made for Jordan. The Section 2.5 guidelines were integrated into the interpreting modules of the programmes in both Jordan and Kenya to ensure that graduates working for
UNHCR in these refugee-hosting countries would be immediately operational on completion of the course and comply with the provisions of refugee law.

**Shifting power and funding: Reconceptualising localisation of humanitarian aid**

Moving onto the area of soft law and interpreter training for humanitarian contexts, the main instrument is the Grand Bargain, an agreement between donor states and international humanitarian organisations, including the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), which was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. It provides an ethnically responsible set of commitments that favour locally designed and implemented responses to humanitarian crises, and represents a multi-stakeholder mechanism intended to bring more efficient responses to humanitarian crises (IASC, 2020) through localisation. As of September 2020, it includes 63 signatories (25 Member States, 11 UN Agencies, five inter-governmental organisations and Red Cross/Red Crescent Movements and 22 non-governmental organizations [NGOs]), representing approximately 84% of all humanitarian donor contributions made in 2019 and 69% of aid received by agencies. Neither Jordan nor Kenya have signed the Grand Bargain commitments (IASC, 2020), but the spirit of the commitments has made its way into local official documents such as the Jordan Response Plans.

Localisation has traditionally meant making local organisations a better fit for partnership with the North, rather than ensuring that they become better and more effective humanitarian actors in their own right (Barakat & Milton, 2020), and its use in this sense has been criticised as too technical and operating in a depoliticised framework. In the current context, however, writing on localisation (Global Mentoring Initiative [GMI], 2020) has become intertwined with a call for more fundamental changes in the humanitarian system, and recent definitions of the concept as well as recommendations to multilateral agencies, international organisations, INGOs, and local NGOs largely agree that “if a local responder can do it, you (international actors) do not have to” (Howe et al., 2019, p. 29). Barbelet’s (2018) definition best describes the aspirations expressed in these recommendations: “the need to recognise, respect, strengthen, rebalance, recalibrate, reinforce or return some form of ownership or place to national and local actors” (p. 5). In practice, however, very slow progress has been made in achieving equal sharing of responsibilities between international and local actors, in providing direct funding to local actors, and in handing over control to local actors (Metcalf-Hough, 2020).

With regard to the Grand Bargain commitments, localisation can occur by default or by design, according to a recent Ford Foundation report (Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development [ARDD], 2020). It happens by default when security, legal, or pandemic-related constraints limit the movement of international actors, obliging them to work more closely with local and national agencies, or when international actors lose their funding and are obliged to exit, often hastily, or at best to manage a structured handover. Localisation happens by design when international actors deliberately seek to collaborate as equal partners with local agencies or organisations, when such collaboration is part of their strategic objectives, enabling them to reduce their involvement and eventually leave the region. This can be considered responsible legacy and sustainability
planning, an example of which can be seen in the Jordan case study. In the Kenyan case study, the funding provided by the original set of international actors to a consortium of African universities (Pan-African Masters Consortium on Interpretation and Translation [PAMCIT], 2020) was not renewed, and localisation thus occurred by default.

Localisation is impacted by a complex web of political, financial, and often hegemonic interests. Negative narratives about local and national capacities, globally and in Jordan, “are not innocent: they serve to justify the establishment and continuation of relationships of dominance and subordination” (ARDD, 2020, p. 19). In the hierarchy of humanitarian and development actors, community-based organisations are on the bottom rung of the ladder; higher up are civil society organisations, national NGOs, INGOs; multilateral organisations and government cooperation agencies are situated at the top. Those situated on the bottom rungs have neither the organisational nor financial capacity to meet the increasingly stringent due diligence requirements of donor agencies, and are therefore automatically relegated to the status of sub-contractors, contractors, or, at best, implementing partners. Not even higher education institutions escape this fate, unless they have developed procedures and guidelines that conform to the strict rules of donors for contractors and sub-contractors. Because they do not meet the legal and financial requirements, smaller institutions and colleges are usually excluded. However, they are usually located in proximity to where humanitarian assistance is needed, and as partners, might provide a more informed contribution, or even better, become independent actors. National actors are also often sidelined because of negative narratives regarding fraud, corruption, lack of impartiality, or neutrality (ARDD, 2020); this sharply contrasts narratives elaborated by international actors, who present themselves as performing better and at scale, and who make ample use of their media to report overwhelmingly positive outcomes.

Local actors find it particularly difficult to present their initiatives as innovative, meeting recognised and established needs as well as national obligations, and to produce evidence of their initiatives’ sustainability. In both Jordan and in Kenya, the establishment of the new training programmes was preceded by creating an enabling environment that included formal needs analyses, linkages to national, regional, and international legislation and humanitarian response planning, and confirmed sources of funding for the initial launch. It was evident throughout the process that local actors are subjected to a much higher level of scrutiny, requiring investment in time and resources that most of them can hardly afford. By contrast, most big international actors dispose of these resources quite readily and are fairly quick to put initiatives in place. They are rarely held to the same cultural standards as local actors and overcome administrative hurdles more easily as they tend to invest considerable sums of money in management infrastructures. This leaves local actors usually in the position of sub-contractors whose contribution to the inception and design of programmes is rarely sought; even participants designated to benefit from such initiatives have repeatedly insisted that many of these internationally designed programmes do not fit their context, are not needed, and do not address their priorities. But these programmes run their course and once the programming cycle concludes, the project is often not renewed for lack of funding.

Such expressions of disempowerment and dominance, together with international actors’ desire and need for constant visibility, their preoccupation with power, status, procedure, and reporting back to their constituencies—ahead of making a sustainable
difference in the lives of those they have come to assist through genuine cooperation and handing-over—all of these elements appear to be at the core of what has been termed “dead aid” (Moyo, 2010). Systemic prejudice in the aid sector has been challenged for years; the slow progress made in operationalising the Grand Bargain commitments is an indication of how resistant the system is to change. Language use in the aid sector (Cornwall & Eade, 2010) reflects the power dynamics and control systems operating in this field, with the result that localisation is interpreted in terms of increasing efficiency as defined by the international system, and not in terms of the sustainable difference that it can make to communities. It is not surprising that many—or perhaps even most—of the international aid buzzwords (Cornwall & Eade, 2010) such as resilience and vulnerability have no equivalents in the local languages, simply because the concepts are alien to those communities (Chmutina et al., 2021).

The case for local training of humanitarian interpreters

How do interpreters working in humanitarian and development contexts navigate the communication divide? How can true local leadership emerge if even the very language of humanitarian and development discourse is impenetrable, if it perpetuates power differentials and is far removed from the experience of those the system is intended to assist? Interpreters, we argue, need to double up as cultural mediators to enable local actors and those at the receiving end of assistance to make informed choices about their roles. It is not helpful to simply use English terms that compromise understanding and prevent local actors moving up the ladder and fulfilling the responsibilities vested in them by the legal frameworks reviewed in this article. We offer two examples of interpreter training programmes designed, developed, and implemented to shift the power to local actors within complex legal, political, and protracted humanitarian contexts. The Diploma in Humanitarian Interpreting and Translation at Jordan’s Yarmouk University was launched in February 2020 amid the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, and concluded in May 2021. The Diploma in Community Interpreting at the University of Nairobi was launched in September 2020, with the first cohort to graduate in January 2022.

Training in and for crisis: Integrating legal obligations and context relevance

The Yarmouk University Diploma in Humanitarian Interpreting and Translation was designed in and for Jordan, a major hosting country for Syrian refugees. UNHCR considers it to be one of the countries most affected by the Syrian crisis, as it hosts the second highest share of refugees per capita in the world. Approximately 20% of Syrian refugees live in camps, while the majority reside in host communities (UNHCR, 2020f). To ease the financial burden on Jordan, international organisations have stepped in to help address various refugee needs, including free services and resources inside and outside the camps such as health care and education. International organisations in Jordan employ national and international staff, and so the demand for translators and interpreters has increased, a fact that greatly contributed to the decision to build a local training programme. Translation and interpreting are not well-established professions in Jordan.
The link to national obligations in terms of disaster preparedness had not been part of the profession’s advocacy efforts, and this has impacted the practice of the profession and the market for language services. Furthermore, employers, including the government, lacking understanding of the vital role of translators and interpreters, usually employ bilinguals, with or without a BA degree, who may or may not have related work experience. Building local capacity in line with the obligations described above that Jordan has assumed within national legal frameworks and under international law is essential for meeting the need to professionalise humanitarian translation and interpreting in the country, followed by appropriate advocacy once capacity has been strengthened.

All academic degrees must be approved by the Ministry of Higher Education, and, given the impact of the Syrian crisis, programme development also had to be informed by the Jordan Response Plan 2018–2020, whose implementation is overseen by the Ministry of Planning and International Development. In light of the urgency of meeting established needs, and in order not to add a new degree whose curricula would barely include two or three interpreting modules to the many academic BA degrees available in translation, the professional diploma was set up at Yarmouk University’s Queen Rania Center for Jordanian Studies and Community Service. The programmes of this Center aim to address clearly established labour market needs. Furthermore, in comparison with other academic programmes, in Jordan a professional diploma offers greater flexibility regarding the use of online learning, and as students were to be recruited among both camp-based refugee populations and disadvantaged Jordanians, blended learning seemed to be the best way to implement a pedagogical model of problem-based learning. It was important to follow the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education guidelines to certify the diploma, which enabled us to meet one of the demands raised by Syrian refugee candidates conscious of the international portability of their new academic credential. Most Higher Education in Emergencies (HEiE) programmes initiated by foreign higher education institutions operating in the Middle East during the Syrian crisis have failed to recognise the legal constraints imposed by the Ministry of Higher Education in Jordan in relation to online learning (Sherab & Kirk, 2016); as a result, the related courses, offered exclusively online, deprive refugees of a recognised academic credential that would subsequently allow them to mainstream into a Jordanian university or find employment. Embedding academic programmes in local universities to meet local and regional demand is thus a crucial dimension of sustainability and credential recognition, and it meets the Minimum Standards of Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2010). Local expertise on legal requirements was critical to programme design, which had to be responsive to humanitarian principles of accountability to affected populations.

Initial curricular guidance and financial and pedagogical assistance were required to pave the way for such training in Jordan. This was achieved through collaboration with the University of Geneva, which operated HEiE programmes in Jordan under a multi-year Ford Foundation grant (#129478). A series of meetings was arranged in Amman, Azraq camp and Yarmouk University in Irbid in June 2019, hosting Jordanian and Syrian translators and interpreters either already working in the field or aiming to do so, as well as faculty members who subsequently would be involved in designing and implementing the diploma. Training trainers was an integral part of the diploma development and subsequent launch. The series of meetings helped us to specify collective and individual needs of potential candidates hailing from different backgrounds. While Jordanian
candidates needed to acquire the skills to compete in the market, Syrian students had comparatively more experience, but lacked credentials required to access the labour market. Potential future programme participants were thus involved from the outset in informing the design and development of the course, thereby complying with the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2010). Informed by the discussions in these meetings, the faculty opted for a holistic approach to addressing students’ development of soft and hard skills within a 9-month diploma programme, ensuring a gradual transition from more transmissive face-to-face pedagogical approaches familiar to most participants, to a problem-solving mode of digital and blended learning. Right from the start, all stakeholders in the project collaborated closely to avoid what Freire (1993) calls the banking model of education, that is, filling people with knowledge without providing them with opportunities to be agents of change.

Initially, it was intended to adopt a blended learning approach, with equal ratios between synchronous and asynchronous learning, to accommodate both the 15 candidates living in Azraq camp (about 120 km east of Irbid) who needed movement passes to leave the camp and to travel regularly between Azraq and Irbid, and the 10 candidates from the host community Irbid. However, the week after the course was officially launched on-site at Yarmouk University, Jordan went into lockdown, forcing us to move the entire course (all 25 students) online. Synchronous classes were held three times a week on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings, for a total of 16 sessions over 16 weeks in each term. When learning hubs in Azraq camp were shut down, individual data bundles for all camp-based learners had to be procured, a complex task considering that refugee learners had neither bank accounts nor the possibility to receive remittances on their cell phones. Zoom was quickly adopted as the learning platform of choice, coupled with Google Classroom as a low-bandwidth Learning Management System, and text messaging forums that functioned reliably even in the low-resource contexts of a refugee camp. This helped instructors make classes more interactive and collaborative, allowing trainees to engage with each other in breakout rooms and on messaging forums. In addition, students were required to follow up on topics and tasks during the synchronous classes on Yarmouk University’s E-learning platform, once they had moved into the translation section of the curriculum. Exams relating to interpreting and translation modules drew on a mix of educational technologies, and there was tight scheduling to meet the legal requirements of Yarmouk University. As one of the students was vision-impaired, additional support structures had to be put in place, including the voluntary support of an experienced blind conference interpreter whose mentoring during the interpreting modules was invaluable.

The interpreting modules covered skill-building in consecutive and whispered interpreting, as well as the management of a variety of interpreted encounters relevant to the Jordan bilingual humanitarian context, in which the emphasis is less on registration, refugee status determination and resettlement interviews, and more on various contexts across the different humanitarian sectors outlined above. In addition, the Syrian crisis has attracted a considerable number of researchers and consultants providing services in psycho-social support, general health, monitoring, and evaluation, all requiring the services of translators and interpreters. The breadth of topics to be covered in both the interpreting and translation parts of the programme therefore reflected needs across the humanitarian programming cycle, and assured graduates of employability beyond the
Syrian crisis. To help trainees obtain a firm grounding in humanitarian translation and interpreting in the Jordanian context, it was also necessary to develop modules aimed at improving their language proficiency, building humanitarian communication skills and translation competencies, and integrating technology and translation by introducing them to different computer-aided translation tools.

The diploma curriculum consisted of 10 modules—five on translation, three on interpreting, one on ethics and a graduation project stretched over three terms. Seven translation modules were delivered by instructors from Yarmouk University (two levels of language enhancement, general and specialised translation, computer tools and project management for translators, and the graduation project); three interpretation modules were delivered by the University of Geneva (introduction to interpreting, consecutive interpreting, and whispered interpreting); and the ethics module was delivered jointly by both institutions. Language enhancement comprised both receptive and productive skills and was designed to help trainees understand a broad variety of humanitarian discourse, speaking styles, and registers to prepare them for better public speaking. Synergies were created with interpreting modules during which students worked on short-term and long-term memory skills, paraphrasing and summarising humanitarian discourse, learning collocations and multi-word units relevant to humanitarian contexts, sight-translating, delivering speeches with confidence, and refining pronunciation. Students created an online story-bank from which interpreting practice material was regularly sourced, and which raised awareness among Jordanian students about the perilous journeys refugees had endured before arriving in Jordan. Rather than simply evoking psycho-social support, the stories represented authentic material on which students could practice their evolving skills. Language interference issues were given particular attention: in humanitarian contexts, code-switching is often the norm and deriving meaning from discourse embedded in a complex humanitarian system has to be based on a solid grasp of ideas rather than words. It was deemed essential for the training to foster familiarity with local humanitarian contexts, active reading skills, speed reading and comprehension, general learning skills, basic strategies for successful management of reading materials during live encounters, and sight translation skills. Trainees also practised writing on topics in response to humanitarian cases that they had either read about or listened to, and which reinforced the significant potential of local training initiatives to respond to authentic needs.

Two translation modules were introduced consecutively, namely Introduction to Translation and Specialised Translation. Both aimed at widening students’ understanding of key theoretical issues, methodologies and approaches required to provide translation at a professional level, and developing their translation, revision, and editing skills across different text types used in humanitarian contexts, with particular focus on text types prevalent in the Syrian crisis context. Both modules were taught through practical sessions, with ample opportunities for discussion of the principles that underlie effective translation strategies. Students reflected critically on their own translation performance as well as that of their peers, drawing on their theoretical knowledge as well as their practical experience as refugees. The Specialised Translation module covered various text types in more depth, for example, incorporating documents from medical and mental health care, ranging from brain anatomy to parenting in war zones. Education in Emergencies (EiE) was also covered in the form of manuals and press releases intended to support the efforts of the EiE community.
As the diploma is also designed to enhance students’ skills and competencies beyond the immediate humanitarian field, the remaining two modules, namely Translation Technologies and Translation Project Management, introduce students to the language industry. An overview of translation technologies focused on computer-aided translation, terminology management, and machine translation post-editing, all designed to provide students with the knowledge needed to interface with an increasingly digital humanitarian system (Meier, 2015) poised to embrace remote management, crowd computing, and crowd-sourcing of humanitarian data. Such systems are of particular relevance in the Syrian crisis, given the extremely limited access of humanitarian actors to populations in need, and the rise of digital humanitarianism where big data has already changed humanitarian response (Meier, 2015). This module also provided hands-on training on several essential translation-related tools, including optical character recognition, translation environment tools, terminology management systems, and machine translation. The Translation Project Management module developed students’ skills in managing and executing collaborative translation and localisation projects. Following trends in the language industry, these include crowdsourcing, collaborative translation, software localisation, and post-editing machine translation. Such tasks not only expose the students to real-life professional work in the language industry, but also simulate a professional educational setting, promoting a student-centred and problem-based learning environment.

With the unique integration of responses to real local needs into a local training programme, graduates of the diploma course are in an exceptional position to put their professional translation and interpreting skills to use in the humanitarian contexts surrounding the Syrian crisis. They are enabled to advocate with the aid industry in favour of integrating translation and interpreting into its standard operating procedures and budgets, to raise the quality and standards for humanitarian communication, and consequently to contribute significantly to building local and regional capacity in disaster preparedness and response across the humanitarian programming cycle. The fact that three students from the first cohort already received job offers prior to completing the course underscores the relevance of the programme. The course will be subjected to Yarmouk University’s regular programme evaluation procedures, as well as to an additional humanitarian evaluation procedure 1 year after the funded programme cycle has completed. The latter evaluation forms part of a larger donor-funded HEiE response, in line with the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2010).

**Handing over by default: Moving beyond aid**

Kenya is home to the University of Nairobi’s Diploma in Community Interpreting. Owing to the country’s fairly stable political climate and a growing economy, Kenya hosts one of the world’s largest refugee populations. Kenya is also a close neighbour to several countries that have suffered unrest, some for a long time, and it is centrally located, which makes it easily accessible for displaced people along different migration routes and using various modes of travel. As the East and Horn of Africa continue to suffer from conflict due to ongoing political unrest, breakdown of national governments and civil war, many of their citizens continue to be forcibly displaced, fleeing their home countries in search of safety.
According to UNHCR (2020b), 53.9% of the 535,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya originate from Somalia (see also UNHCR Kenya, 2020). Other major refugee groups are from South Sudan (24.7%), the Democratic Republic of Congo (9%) and Ethiopia (5.8%). There are also smaller groups of asylum seekers from other regions, including Sudan, Rwanda, Eritrea, Burundi, and Uganda, which together make up 6.6% of Kenya’s total refugee population. Given the geopolitical situation in the region, and judging by earlier trends, it is expected that during 2021 more than 30,000 new asylum seekers will arrive in the country. The majority of these new arrivals will be from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and South Sudan. To accommodate the large numbers flowing into the country, two major camps were created in the northern part: Dadaab in Garrissa County and Kakuma in Turkana County. While most people fleeing from conflict in South Sudan arrive in Kakuma and the nearby Kalobeyei camps, most Somali refugees flee to Dadaab. The Dadaab camp holds about 44% of the total refugee population, while 40% are resident in Kakuma, which also includes the Kakuma/Kalobeyei integrated settlement, a novel experimental approach to the design of durable solutions for protracted displacement in Kenya (KISED, 2018). Given that Kenya has instituted a strict encampment policy, 84% of refugees live in camps. The remaining 16% are found in major urban areas, particularly the Nairobi Metropolitan. This is the opposite of the situation in Jordan, where 80% of refugees live outside camps. Kenya’s refugee population is also highly multilingual. These considerations informed the design and implementation of the interpreter training programme.

International humanitarian organisations and other stakeholders have worked alongside the Government of Kenya to help refugees rebuild their lives. These organisations provide health care, education, and other skill-based training to equip refugees for employability as well as, given the multilingual nature of Kenya and its refugee context, sufficient communication skills so that they may avail themselves of essential services. The Kenyan Constitution provides for equal treatment of refugees regarding access to education, including higher education and vocational training. Language mediation is needed to ensure that as many refugees as possible participate in the discussion about the management of their affairs, including their registration as asylum seekers, their refugee status determination, their medical care, and other needs associated with their status. According to UNHCR Kenya (2020), 73 languages are spoken in Kakuma, with UNHCR interpreters there currently covering about 25 languages. For refugee status determination, about 23,000 cases are awaiting to be heard in Kakuma/Kalobeyei alone, and another 3,000 in Dadaab. English and Swahili are the official languages of schooling and, as is the case generally in East Africa, most people have at least three or four languages. In the multilingual Kakuma camp, Swahili is usually considered to be the language “to get around with,” while English is the language “to get ahead.” Dadaab camps feature less linguistic diversity, given the homogeneity of the camp population of Somali origin.

Two major studies were carried out in Kakuma/Kalobeyei (International Finance Corporation [IFC], 2018) and in Dadaab (International Labour Organization [ILO] & UNHCR, 2019), providing a socioeconomic analysis of the two camps and outlining potential avenues for development. Essential factors to consider are available resources and migration patterns—notably voluntary repatriation to Somalia from Dadaab, or frequent cross-border movements into and out of South Sudan—as these inform investment in human and material resources, including education and training. Despite urgent needs
in the humanitarian sector regarding language mediation, other parameters—such as the multilingual nature of Kenya and East Africa, the economic development potential in refugee-hosting counties, employability upon repatriation of refugees, or their resettlement in a third country—all had to be taken into consideration in the final decision to open the Diploma in Community Interpreting programme at the University of Nairobi. The objective was to train community interpreters, rather than interpreters destined predominantly for the humanitarian sector, and to include various specialisations in the curriculum, one of which is humanitarian interpreting.

Funding for the programme has been provided through the African Higher Education in Emergencies Network, whose university members offer diplomas with a strong employability potential to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) on the continent. The network brings together various stakeholders from higher education and industry, and permits close collaboration with international organisations and the private sector. There is multi-donor funding, and diplomas are delivered to refugees and IDPs digitally. The network benefits from on-the-ground support from refugee-led organisations specialised in the delivery of digital higher education programmes. The University of Nairobi had benefitted for years from financial and material support as part of the Pan-African Masters Consortium on Interpretation and Translation (PAMCIT, 2020), of which it was a founding member. When funding ended, the handover by default was leveraged to launch a new digital programme that would be firmly embedded in the local and regional context, be designed and developed by a local actor, and be implemented in the field by refugees.

The programme is anchored in the vision and mission of the University of Nairobi and seeks to provide quality education to equip fragile communities to participate in their own development agenda, in accordance with the sustainable development goals and the development strategies outlined in the economic development plans of the two major refugee-hosting counties in Kenya. Two factors informed the design of the curriculum, which had to provide employability options for both refugees and host country students. The first is the legal and political macro-context of Kenya’s implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, which prominently features refugee self-reliance as one of its four outcomes; the second is Kenya’s encampment policy for refugees in camps in the Turkana and Garrissa counties, which face difficult conditions that include food insecurity, limited access to basic social services, and poor livelihood opportunities (World Bank, 2018). Refugees would need to market their skills in refugee camps, while host country students would need to compete in the broader Kenyan language market. The programme thus supports national obligations regarding disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction, international obligations under the Global Compact to increase refugee self-reliance through equipping them with skills that are marketable in their communities, and refugee empowerment in that access to and working towards a higher education credential is facilitated on the ground by refugee-led organisations intimately familiar with the scenarios interpreters need to master.

Through advocacy efforts undertaken by the African Higher Education in Emergencies Network, graduates are supported in transitioning into the formal economy in Kenya, where refugees have the legal right to work but where enjoyment of that right lags far behind legal aspirations. This is in contrast to neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Rwanda which have a much more liberal labour market access policy for refugees.
The diploma thus fulfils several functions: developing professional competencies in an area in demand in Kenya, both in and outside refugee contexts; building capacity for disaster preparedness and response according to the legal frameworks outlined earlier; and the enjoyment of decent work and labour rights through a networked approach to Higher Education in Emergencies in, by, and for Africa and Africans. Individuals interested in furthering their academic or career objectives in interpreting after gaining the diploma may pursue further training and enrol, for example, in the University of Nairobi’s Master in Conference Interpreting or Master in Translation.

The course also allows the target group to acquire the necessary practical skills through digital internships with the private sector. The programme therefore provides a unique opportunity for students and scholars in the field to play an increasing role in community interpretation, as it addresses the communication issues of the local and international community. In the humanitarian context, quality interpretation influences the day-to-day well-being of refugees and asylum seekers by offering effective representation across the refugee registration/status determination/resettlement continuum; it also secures mediation in communication with humanitarian actors when speakers do not share a common language, this being the case for the majority of refugees and the international organisations working among them. In the African context, and as Muylle’s (2008) mapping study revealed, it is essential to ensure that trained professionals have qualifications that are marketable on the continent and for such qualifications to be reviewed periodically to inform further training efforts.

For the programme to become a permanent offering at the University of Nairobi and thus secure its sustainability, key advocacy arguments within the university had to draw on social and historical perspectives of Africa related to increases in the number of migrants in this region, which makes communication and mediation across language barriers inevitable. Interpretation is essential to permitting communication to take place in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts, from humanitarian to public service, court, and medical settings, which also reflect the specialisations offered as part of the Diploma in Community Interpreting. Outside the humanitarian context, the value of the skill sets imparted through this diploma also needed to be assessed against the advances achieved in Kenya as an information society. With over 42 indigenous languages spoken in Kenya, but with official, education, and work-related communication restricted to English and Swahili, social cohesion is threatened if the majority of the rural population are excluded from the modern information society (Bore, 2019). As part of preparedness, it is thus deemed essential for Kenya to be able to avail itself of professional talent in times of need, even if that talent is not necessarily trained in all of the 42 indigenous languages.

The diploma programme is offered digitally, primarily with the use of multimedia in distance education; it makes use of the University of Nairobi’s LMS for synchronous learning, with back-up offline availability on external storage devices for asynchronous learning, and supplemented by messaging platforms for reaching a highly dispersed cohort of learners across Kakuma, Kalobeyei, and Dadaab refugee camps. Years of investment by the European Commission-SCIC (Interpretation-Conferences), the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and the African Union in the Pan-African Masters in Conference Interpreting (PAMCIT, 2020)—of which the University of Nairobi’s Centre for Translation and Interpretation was a founding member—facilitated the resourcing of the new Diploma in Community Interpreting, as graduates have been recruited as lecturers. This has also
greatly facilitated the integration of the diploma as a permanent programme at the University of Nairobi, which has distinct advantages over project-bound initiatives that disappear when funding dries up.

In sum, the needs analysed in a humanitarian context have led through diverse synergies to the establishment of the Diploma in Community Interpreting. In addition to meeting communication needs in humanitarian contexts, the Diploma strengthens Kenya’s preparedness for disaster, supports cultural diversity in a highly multilingual country and region, promotes refugees’ access to higher education diplomas with a strong employability potential, and, through the admission of refugees and IDPs (internally displaced people) in refugee and IDP contexts throughout Africa, has the potential of setting standards for the continent as a whole. The programme is embedded in protracted refugee contexts—Kenyan camps have existed for over 20 years—and illustrates how localisation by default strengthens local actors, meets national and international obligations, empowers refugees and enhances their self-reliance, and through successfully navigating the path to sustainability, has enabled independence from international aid.

Conclusions

Whereas translation and interpretation are not formally recognised in the national frameworks covered in this article, we follow O’Brien et al.’s (2018) argument and Article 9 of the United Nation’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations, 1966), which, among other rights, includes the right to seek, receive, and impart information, as well as Article 26 which clearly emphasises that language as a trait should not present grounds for discrimination. We also echo Delgado-Luchner’s (2019) recommendation that “contextualizing interpreter training […] implies training interpreters not only in Africa, but according to African countries’ needs,” but expand this to include any region in which conflict and disasters occur. We depart, however, from what might be understood by some as a reductionist idea of “contextualizing” interpreter training, as this tends to imply that training has been designed elsewhere, usually in the North or West, and requires “contextualization” to meet the needs of the local context. The real problem is not necessarily the term itself, but the practices behind it. We argue that the training of interpreters to work in humanitarian contexts needs to have its roots in the country/region. It needs to be designed in, and for, that country/region, and embedded in a larger and more ambitious national strategy that aims to create a pool of trained interpreters and associations that support ongoing professional development and the sustainability of that capacity. If the shift to participatory humanitarian action is to become reality, and if the needs of local populations are to be met, with full respect for their local language(s) and culture(s), the shift to downwards accountability requires local actors to design and implement training.

Sitting at the complex intersection of humanitarian response, the humanitarian-development nexus and New Ways of Working (IASC, 2020), and the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, the two case studies discussed illustrate a departure from the conventional export of interpreter training models from renowned training institutions in the North and West so as to allow for shifting the power, and the funding, to local actors in line with the Grand Bargain commitments. For participants in such training programmes to be employable, the training needs to be broad enough to prepare them for
other assignments in the local/regional market, while ensuring that the specificity of humanitarian contexts occupies a significant place in the curriculum. Employability throughout the humanitarian programming cycle and beyond enhances the retention of talent, and gives rise to continuous professional development that can be organised by training institutions, in close collaboration with local professional associations and employers.

Moser-Mercer et al. (2014) state in their conclusions that capacity building in humanitarian interpreting “helps constitute a pool of skilled language mediators who are in turn able to advise other persons hired as interpreters on skill-related issues” (p. 16). They distinguish two types of profile for these interpreters: “language experts whose job title or terms of reference include interpreting, but who are not trained nor professional interpreters, and others who take on interpreting assignments when needed by virtue of their knowledge of two languages.” The authors recommend that persons whose job titles include interpreting receive professional training to enhance the quality of humanitarian communication, to ensure better communication in times of conflict and the post-conflict phase, and to support the promotion of, and respect for, human rights. The Global Humanitarian Response Plan (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UNOCHA], 2020) refers to the importance of engagement with affected populations: the global pandemic and the imposed restrictions on mobility are reinforcing the imperative to which over 63 signatories have committed since the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 (IASC, 2020), namely working with and through local populations, and channelling at least 25% of international aid money directly to local actors. This means shifting up a gear, from technical-level engagement with target beneficiaries on specific programs to engaging them in assessing needs, designing approaches that best address those needs and strengthening their capacities to deliver their own responses through grant-making, training and mentoring. (Metcalfe-Hough, 2020, p. 4)

Future humanitarian response plans should thus be “built upon, not just informed by, the views of affected communities,” ensuring that “affected populations are able to engage in or influence all stages of this process, from assessments and analysis to programme design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation” (Metcalfe-Hough, 2020, p. 4).

The complexity of the humanitarian system, its emphasis on urgency in the delivery of services, and its neocolonial nature have most likely contributed to sidelining issues of multilingual communication. The language of humanitarianism is for the most part English, but that is not the case for the majority of aid recipients. “Hearing people at the receiving end of international aid” (Anderson et al., 2012) rarely advances to active listening and hardly ever results in sharing power. This perpetuates what Freire (1993) described as dealing with people as objects to be acted upon, rather than as subjects who act. To achieve democratisation of aid, local people need to be considered as sources of knowledge, rather than as mere informants, and knowledge must come from a broad spectrum of people in need, not merely from those who are stamped with approval by aid organisations. This requires modifying the current supply-driven economic model for how aid is provided, transforming it into a demand-driven system in which people in need drive the change, as is exemplified in our two case studies. To improve the quality of communication in humanitarian contexts, moreover, all societies need to invest in training their own language professionals to meet the
diverse communication needs across the humanitarian response continuum. It is not merely theoretical change that is required, but a rethinking of the design and application of mechanisms that generate tangible change, a process that is largely incompatible with the short programming and project cycles of humanitarian assistance that operate almost exclusively with earmarked funding. Theories of change in the sector should be less concerned with impact and more concerned with the sustainability of much needed programmes that continue without oversight from foreign managers.

The two case studies show that such transformative agendas can be implemented by understanding the uniqueness of the local humanitarian contexts, and by taking into account the legal frameworks in which the relevant countries and regions need to operate, it was possible to build uniquely local training programmes that meet the needs of their societies. These programmes offer strong employability potential for their graduates, informed by the needs analyses that preceded the planning of these initiatives. They contribute to refugee integration in the relevant country, have empowered refugees to co-deliver programmes, and have laid the foundation for a professionally trained surge capacity when disaster and crisis strike. The programmes used seed funding to inform a long-term agenda of sovereignty over their development; this has enabled them to adjust swiftly to changing needs on the ground. Responsive training of qualified interpreters for humanitarian contexts, who are also capable of earning a living outside of these contexts, improves chances of real localisation of humanitarian assistance, brings us closer to realising the aspirations of the Grand Bargain, and paves the way for democratising aid.

Author contribution
Barbara Moser-Mercer contributed the conceptual framework and analysis, Somia Qudah, Mona Nabeel Ali Malkawi, and Mohammed Al-Batineh contributed the Jordan case study, and Jayne Mutiga contributed the Kenya case study.

Declaration of conflicting interests
The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding
The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Programme development and implementation described in the two case studies was made possible in part through grants by Ford Foundation (Grant #129478) to the University of Geneva for Yarmouk University, and Porticus-Auxilium (Grant GR-073849) to Women Educational Researchers of Kenya for the African Higher Education in Emergencies Network.

ORCID iDs
Barbara Moser-Mercer https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9260-2994
Somia Qudah https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5857-972X
Mona Nabeel Ali Malkawi https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9248-2881
Jayne Mutiga https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6925-4162
Mohammed Al-Batineh https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8219-9900
Notes

1. An international document adopted by the United Nations whose goal is to “prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience. (See https://unece.org/sendai-framework.)”

2. Detailed monitoring, evaluation, and learning data relevant to these two programmes will be included in future publications.

References

Anderson, M. B., Brown, D., & Jean, I. (2012). Time to listen: Hearing people on the receiving end of international aid. CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. https://www.alnap.org/help-library/time-to-listen-hearing-people-on-the-receiving-end-of-international-aid

Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development. (2020). Strengthening localization in Jordan. Localization: Reinforce and support, do not replace or undermine. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58256bc615d5dbb852592fe40/t/5fc62b1f9ee0f32bb87266a66/160682719045/LOCALIZATION+REINFORCE+AND+SUPPORT+DO+NOT+REPLACE+OR+UNDERMINE+.pdf

Barakat, S., & Milton, S. (2020). Localisation across the humanitarian-development-peace process. Journal of Peacebuilding & Development, 15(2), 147–163. https://doi.org/10.1177/1542316620922805

Barbelet, V. (2018). As local as possible, as international as necessary: Understanding capacity and complementarity in humanitarian action [HPG Working Paper]. Overseas Development Institute. https://odi.org/en/publications/as-local-as-possible-as-international-as-necessary-understanding-capacity-and-complementarity-in-humanitarian-action/

Bore, S. (2019). Multilingual education in Kenya: Implications for culture preservation and transmission. In B. Johannessen & G. Guzmán (Eds.), Bilingualism and bilingual education: Politics, policies and practices in a globalized society (pp. 125–146). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05496-0_7

Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network (CDAC). (2011). Communication is aid. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDmKLCeY7Nis

Chmutina, K., Sadler, N., Von Meding, J., & Abukhalaf, A. (2021). Lost (and found?) in translation: Key terminology in disaster studies. Disaster Prevention and Management, 30(2), 149–162. https://doi.org/10.1108/DPM-07-2020-0232

Cornwall, A., & Eade, D. (2010). Deconstructing development discourse. Buzzwords and fuzwords. Practical Action Publishing.

Delgado-Luchner, C. (2019). Contextualizing interpreter training in Africa: Two case studies from Kenya. International Journal of Interpreter Education, 11(2), 4–15.

Delgado-Luchner, C., & Kherbiche, L. (2018). Without fear or favour. The positionality of ICRC and UNHCR interpreters in the humanitarian field. Target, 30(3), 415–438. https://doi.org/10.1075/target.17108.del

Federici, F. M., & O’Brien, S. (2019). Translation in cascading crises. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429341052

Footitt, H., & Kelly, M. (2012). Languages at war: Policies and practices of language contacts in conflict. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137010278

Freire, P. (1993). Pedagogy of the oppressed. Continuum Books.
Global Mentoring Initiative. (2020). *Localisation bibliography & video links English language*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58256bc615d5db852592fe40/v/5f8e1143cfa41b2e080d53/1603014981301/GMI+Localisation+Bibliography+2020.pdf

Government of Kenya: Ministry of State Special Programs. (2009). *Draft national policy for disaster management in Kenya*. Government of Kenya. https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5a7ad1034.pdf

Global Protection Cluster. (2020). *Protection mainstreaming toolkit*. http://www.globalprotection-cluster.org/_assets/files/aors/protection_mainstreaming/gpc-pm_toolkit-2017.en.pdf

Howe, K., Munive, J., & Rosenstock, K. (2019). *Views from the ground: Perspectives on localization in the Horn of Africa*. Feinstein International Center, Tufts University. https://fic.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/FIC_LocalizationAfrica_7.233.pdf

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. (2010). *Minimum standards for education in emergencies*. https://inee.org/resources/inee-minimum-standards

Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies & Translators without Borders. (2019). *Language solutions for education in emergencies*. Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. https://inee.org/resources/language-solutions-education-emergencies

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (2020). *About the Grand Bargain*. https://interagencystanding-committee.org/about-the-grand-bargain

International Finance Corporation. (2018). *Kakuma as a marketplace. A consumer and market study of a refugee camp and town in northwest Kenya*. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/0f3e93fb-35dc-4a80-a955-6a7028d0f7f2/20180427_Kakuma-as-a-Marketplace_v1.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mc8eL2K

International Labour Organization & United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2019). *Doing business in Dadaab, Kenya. Market systems analysis for local economic development in Dadaab*. International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_696141.pdf

Inghilleri, M. (2010). You don’t make war without knowing why. *The Translator, 16*(2), 175–196. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2010.10799468

Jordan National Center for Security and Crisis Management. (2019). *Jordan National Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2019–2022*. https://www.preventionweb.net/files/68511_nationalnatrualdisasterriskreduciot.pdf

KISEDJP. (2018). *Kalobeyei integrated socio-economic development plan*. UNHCR Kenya. https://www.unhcr.org/ke/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/KISEDJP_Kalobeyei-Integrated-Socio-Econ-Dev-Programme.pdf

Meier, P. (2015). *Digital humanitarians. How big data is changing the face of humanitarian response*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1201/b18023

Metcalfe-Hough, V. (2020). *The future of the Grand Bargain: A new ambition?*. Overseas Development Institute Humanitarian Policy Group. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-06/Grand%20Bargain%20ODI%20Think-piece%202020.pdf

Moser-Mercer, B., Kherbiche, L., & Class, B. (2014). Interpreting conflict: Training challenges in humanitarian field interpreting. *Journal of Human Rights Practice, 6*(1), 140–158. https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/hut025

Moyo, D. (2010). *Dead aid. Why aid is not working and why there is a better way for Africa*. Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.

Muylle, N. (2008). *Languages matter. Training translators, interpreters and public service interpreters in Africa*. United Nations Office. https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/36026152/project-report-by-noel-muylle-iamladp

Organisation of African Unity/United Nations (OAU/UN). (1976). *OAU convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa*. United Nations Treaty Collection. https://
O’Brien, S., Federici, F. M., Cadwell, P., Marlowe, J., & Gerber, B. (2018). Language translation during disaster: A comparative analysis of five national approaches. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, 31*, 627–636. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2018.07.006

Organization of Islamic Cooperation. (2012). *Ashgabat declaration of the international ministerial conference of the organization of Islamic cooperation on refugees in the Islamic world*. https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/595c95ba4.pdf 2021

Orlando, M. (2016). *Symposium on humanitarian interpreting*. https://vimeopro.com/monasharts/humanitarian-interpreting

Pan-African Masters Consortium on Interpretation and Translation. (2020). *Pan-African Masters in conference interpreting*. https://ec.europa.eu/education/knowledge-centre-interpretation/pan-african-masters-consortium-interpretation-and-translation-pamcit_en

Ruiz Rosendo, L., & Persaud, C. (2016). Interpreting in conflict situations and in conflict zones throughout history. *Special issue of Linguistica Antverpiensia New Series—Themes in Translation Studies, 15*, 1–35.

Scarnecchia, D. P., Raymond, N. A., Greenwood, F., Howarth, C., & Poole, D. N. (2017). A rights-based approach to information in humanitarian assistance. *PLOS Currents Disaster* [Online]. http://currents.plos.org/disasters/index.html%3Fp=34607.html

Sherab, D., & Kirk, K. (2016). *Access to higher education for refugees in Jordan*. ARDD Legal Aid. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/access_to_higher_education_for_refugees_in_jordan.pdf

Sphere. (2018). *The core humanitarian standard*. CHS Alliance, The Sphere Project and Groupe URD. https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/resources/chs-guidance-notes-and-indicators

United Nations. (1948). Universal declaration of human rights. *United Nations General Assembly Resolution, 217A(III)*, 71–79. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

United Nations. (1966). *International covenant on civil and political rights: Adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations on 19 December 1966*. https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%20999/volume-999-i-14668-english.pdf

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2020a). *UNHCR refugee population statistics database* [Electronic Dataset]. https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2020b). *Kenya: Registered refugees and asylum seekers as of 31 December 2020*. https://www.unhcr.org/ke/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/01/Kenya-Infographics-31-December-2020.pdf

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2020c). *Participatory assessment in humanitarian operations*. https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/legal/450e920e2/unhcr-tool-participatory-assessment-operations-part-introduction.html

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2020d). *Procedural standards for refugee status determination under UNHCR’s mandate*. https://www.unhcr.org/4317223c9.pdf

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2020e). *Convention and protocols relating to the status of refugees*. https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2020f). *UNHCR Fact Sheet. Jordan: September 2020*. https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Jordan%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20September%202020_1.pdf

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Kenya. (2020). *Figures at a glance*. https://www.unhcr.org/ke/figures-at-a-glance

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2020). *Global humanitarian response plan—COVID-19*. https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/GHRP-COVID19_July_update.pdf
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2016). UNISDR annual report 2015. https://www.undrr.org/publication/unisdr-annual-report-2015
World Bank. (2018). Kenya—Development response to displacement impacts project: Additional financing—Social assessment: Social assessment report. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/534001531467006900/Social-assessment-report

Biographies

Barbara Moser-Mercer (corresponding author) is professor emerita at the University of Geneva and visiting professor at the University of Nairobi. Her research has focused on the cognitive and cognitive neuroscience dimension of interpreting, on the acquisition of complex skills, and on learning in fragile contexts. She currently coordinates the African Higher Education in Emergencies Network.

Somia Qudah is assistant professor of translation at the Translation Department, Yarmouk University, Jordan. She was trained as a translator and community interpreter in the United Kingdom before gaining her PhD in Translation Studies from the University of Leeds. Her main research interests are translator training and translation quality assessment in various texts and genres. Her recent projects focused on evaluating the translation of mental health resources into Arabic, as well as localising innovative psychotherapy interventions in both humanitarian and non-humanitarian fields.

Mona Nabeel Ali Malkawi is assistant professor at the Department of Translation, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan. She received her PhD in Comparative Literature and Translation from the University of Arkansas, USA. Her research interests are in world literature, comparative literature, Middle Eastern studies, postcolonial literature, literary translation, translation and conflict, and interpreting.

Jayne Mutiga is associate professor of Linguistics and Communication Skills at the University of Nairobi where she is the director of the Centre for Translation & Interpretation. She holds a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Nairobi. Her research interests are in socio-linguistics and language practice, language endangerment, second-language acquisition, and intercultural communication.

Mohammed Al-Batineh is associate professor at the Department of Translation at Yarmouk University, Jordan. He obtained his PhD in Translation Studies from Kent State University, USA. His research interests include translation technologies, audiovisual translation, videogame localisation, and translation pedagogy.