



# Interpreter Training

Institute for Social and Economic Development

## Summary

This training of trainer's workshop is designed for refugee farmer incubator interpreters and/or staff who work together to deliver trainings and technical assistance. It is also useful for outside service providers and partners (e.g. extension educators) who provide trainings with refugee farmers using interpreters. The two role-play resources can be used regularly when working with interpreters throughout the season.

**The need:** Working with interpreters requires preparation, analysis of program capacity, and a commitment to ongoing communications with both interpreters and farmers. Often, refugee and incubator serving programs do not have clear protocol around the use of interpretation, and informal interpreters may lack specific guidance for how to interpret. This training can provide some inspiration and activities to address these needs.

# Who made this guide?

Collaboration and Testing



**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:** This teaching resource was developed by the Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED Solutions) in partnership with refugee farmer training programs across the country who provided feedback on this lesson, which is now integrated throughout the guide. From 2015 to 2017, ISED partnered with twelve refugee farmer training programs through a USDA BFRDP educational enhancement grant, to support the design and testing of new and shareable teaching resources for culturally and linguistically diverse farmers. To learn more about this project, or to access the whole list of newly developed teaching resources for refugee farmer training programs, [see this web address](#). For more in-depth explanations of the teaching approaches and activities used in these materials, please see the 'Refugee Farmer Teaching Handbook' [available at this address](#). While these resources were designed with refugee audiences in mind, they can be adapted and used in any farmer training or incubator setting.

**VARIATION:**

Throughout this guide, boxes (like this one) contain variations and adaptations that serve varying programs and farmers. They are suggestions and reflections from other programs based on how they made this workshop work for them.

**TEACHING TIP:**

Throughout this guide, boxes (like this one) contain teaching tips to help you better facilitate farmer learning. Most come from other programs who have tested and reflected on using this lesson.

**DEVELOPER'S NOTE:**

Throughout this guide, boxes (like this one) contain notes from this guide's developer that provide insight into how a lesson is typically taught at the developer's program.



**ICONS:** You will find the icons below throughout this guidebook. They are there so you are prepared for the activity and can get an idea of what it will bring at a glance.



SIGNS/CARDS



POWERPOINT



WORKSHEET



DISCUSSION



VOCABULARY



INDOOR



OUTDOOR



TALKING POINTS

**WHAT TESTERS SAY:** “This is a great resource with a lot of information in there that I hadn’t even thought to seek out!”

- **Hannah, Wakumlima Cooperative**

“This training is a great primer as it focuses on the interpreter/service provider relationship. The interpreters appreciated the training very much.”

- **Alex, IRC New Roots Salt Lake City**

“The pre-session vocab list is useful.”

- **Ashley, New Lands Farm**



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Adaptable except where noted.



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- Participants will draw from their interpretation experience to create shared definitions of language justice and multilingual spaces.

## **9 INTERPRETATION BEST PRACTICE / ACTIVITY 2 / 20 MINUTES**

### **Discussion**

- Participants will workshop a list of practices that speakers and interpreters should aim to follow.

## **11 TEST IT OUT: ROLE PLAY! / ACTIVITY 3 / 30-40 MINUTES**

### **Interpretation role play**

- The staff member and interpreter pair up and go through a mock interpreted session, asking appropriate questions and reviewing vocabulary beforehand, and completing the post-interpretation survey afterwards.

## **13 FINDING & SELECTING INTERPRETERS / ACTIVITY 4 / 15 MINUTES**

### **Policy and practice development**

- The group will articulate some policies and practices around who should interpret, what special skills/knowledge interpreters should have, and who should not interpret.

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### **Discussion**

- Participants will reflect on what they learned by answering three basic questions.

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### **Lesson supplements**

- 1: Definitions
- 2: Best Practice for Interpreting
- 3: Finding and Selecting Interpreters

# Audience and Objectives

Adaptable except where noted.



**OBJECTIVES:** At the end of this module, growers will be able to:

- Define basic terminology of interpretation
- Jointly define language justice and multilingual spaces
- Create a list of best practices to ensure a well-interpreted session
- Apply their skills to a mock interpretation session, using set up questions, in-session best practices, and post-session reflection

**WHO:** Group of 4-18 staff and interpreters

- This is intended to serve as a professional development training for interpreters and staff in refugee farmer training programs.
- Some activities are more practical for interpreters' skill building, and others emphasize staff knowledge building. However, both groups are involved in every activity to enhance understandings and develop collaborative skills.
- This training can be done with primarily interpreters, or with primarily staff. There are a few important modifications detailed throughout to help adapt this to fit either group.

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE:** Appropriate for any program staff working with interpreters

# Resources needed

Adaptable except where noted.

**TIME:** 2 hours

**LOCATION:** Indoor classroom

**SUPPLIES:** For Participants

- Post-Interpretation Survey
- Vocabulary list
- Interpreting scenarios handout

**Supporting Resources for Trainer**

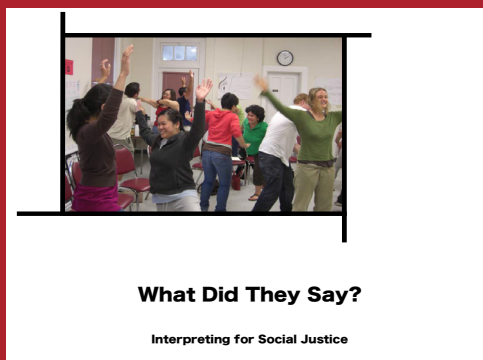
- User's Guide
- Interpreting for Social Justice curriculum
- Language Justice

**Other Materials**

- Flip chart pad
- Dark thick markers
- Tape or tacks to stick paper to walls



LANGUAGE JUSTICE TOOLKIT



INTERPRETING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

**POST INTERPRETATION SURVEY**  
**Interpreter Survey:** Thank you for interpreting with us today. Please answer the questions below honestly so that we can make our meetings better for you and our clients.

Interpreter name \_\_\_\_\_  
Interpreting organization (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

1) How many times have you translated with us?  
0  
1-5  
6-10  
More than 10

2) Do you have a background in agriculture?

3) How many words did you hear today that were hard to interpret?  
0  
1-5  
6-10  
More than 10

POST-INTERPRETATION SURVEY

# Interpretation 101

1

TIME: 20 Minutes

## OVERVIEW:

In this introductory activity, participants (interpreters and/or staff) will draw from their experiences to create shared definitions.

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Half-sheets of paper
- Large newsprint
- Dark colored markers
- Sticky notes (optional)

## OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:

By the end of this activity, participants can:

- Define basic terminology for interpretation.
- Jointly define language justice and multilingual spaces.

## VOCABULARY:

Interpretation	Consecutive interpretation
Translation	Simultaneous interpretation
Language justice	Multilingual spaces

## DEVELOPER'S NOTE:

Much of this activity has been adapted from The Highlander Center's *Language Justice Toolkit*. Many thanks to The Highlander Center for their written work, as well as for conducting a training with ISED in 2016.

## STEP 1: SET UP

Set up the session in a way that is comfortable to you. This might mean setting some shared expectations and ground rules for participants and the facilitator.

## STEP 2: INTERPRETATION VS. TRANSLATION



Review the agenda and objectives of the session, and create some shared language by reminding the participants of the difference between *interpretation* and *translation*. (See Appendix 1 for definitions as provided by The Highlander Center.)

- Interpretation:** Refers to spoken language. Interpretation is the process of orally transmitting a message in one language to another.
  - **Consecutive Interpretation:** This is where the speaker regularly pauses to let the interpreter interpret what was just said.
  - **Simultaneous Interpretation:** As the name suggests, the speaker and the interpreter are speaking at the same time.

- b. **Translation:** Refers to the written word, as opposed to the spoken word. Translating a document would mean re-writing it in another language.

### STEP 3: THINK - PAIR - SHARE



- a. Encourage participants to share their own experience as interpreters, minority language speakers, or working with interpreters. Divide participants into small groups/partners in a Think-Pair-Share (TPS) discussion format. In TPS discussions, each participant is given 1-2 minutes to think about their response to the prompt (if preferred, writing thoughts down). Next, participants will discuss each question with their partner/group for 3-6 minutes. Then have each pair/small group share one or two thoughts with everyone. (In the interest of time, you may choose to have just a few volunteers share key takeaways.)
- b. **Discussion prompt:** “Talk about a time when you were a minority language speaker and were not able to follow along with the spoken language of the group around you. How did this make you feel?”
- c. **Discussion prompt:** “Talk about a time you were asked to interpret for someone (informally, formally, etc.). What feelings, questions, or concerns came up?”
- “If you have never been asked to interpret anything, think about a time you had to interpret something cultural or generational between two people or two groups. How did you feel?”
- d. **Discussion prompt:** “Talk about any experience you have had working with interpreters who are sharing your message. What kinds of feelings did you experience?”

#### TEACHING TIP:

Draw heavily upon interpreter experience if they are present. Their experiences can serve as the basis for further discussion. One tester mentioned that discussions that draw from interpreters’ own experiences can lead to opportunities for peer teaching.

### STEP 4: MULTILINGUAL SPACES AND LANGUAGE JUSTICE



- After the group has shared their experiences, introduce the concepts of language justice and multilingual spaces. As a group, brainstorm responses to the following prompts:
- a. Write the term ‘Multilingual Spaces’ at the top of a large newsprint or whiteboard, and collect thoughts from the group. Ask, “What might this term mean? What does this mean to you?” Participants can either collect their thoughts on sticky notes to add to a larger space, contribute thoughts orally that you write down, or come up individually to write their ideas on the board.
- b. Repeat the process above with the term ‘Language Justice.’ In the interest of time, you may choose to brainstorm just one of these concepts.



# Interpretation Best Practice

2

**TIME:** 20 Minutes

## OVERVIEW:

The group will workshop a list of practices that the speaker and the interpreter should aim to follow when interpreting. The facilitator can guide and revise these practices to include the practices established by The Highlander Center or your own organizational guidelines (Appendix 2).

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Flip chart

- Dark markers
- OPTIONAL: Half pieces of paper or large sticky notes for groups to write their own practices and post to whiteboard or wall
- OPTIONAL: Lists from The Highlander Center available for your reference (below)

## OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:

By the end of this activity, participants will:

- Create a list of best practices to ensure a well-interpreted session.

## STEP 1: DISCUSSION



Explain that you will be listing practices that both the speaker and the interpreter should engage in to ensure a more successful session. Explain that you will begin with a discussion of what 'bad' interpretation might look like, and the problems that might arise from it.



- Get the discussion going by either:
  - Discussing the following quote about the potential pitfalls of poor interpretation practices. The Highlander Center notes: "Not only does the lack of accuracy create confusion, but bad interpretation can be experienced as a lack of respect to people's language, ideas, and identity, and it can undermine the values of language justice by failing to facilitate true participation, communication, and inclusion." Ask the group to discuss what speakers and interpreters should do.
  - Watching videos by The Center for Participatory Change and discuss what could go wrong in interpretation. <https://youtu.be/sTzTvJO9ntg>
- Open discussion up with the group, 'popcorn style' (participants speak randomly when they would like), or in a more structured way (think-pair-share). Once you have identified problems that could arise from 'bad' interpretation, move on to listing strategies and practices for avoiding those problems.

## STEP 2: BRAINSTORM



Appoint a scribe or do the recording yourself on newsprint: First, record ideas about what the SPEAKER can do to ensure a more successful interpreted training. Either simultaneously or following that, record what the INTERPRETER can do to ensure a better interpreted session.

## STEP 3: ADDITIONAL TALKING POINTS



Feel free to add anything from the lists below, if not brought up by participants.

- a. **What SPEAKERS should do to practice better interpretation:**
  - Always explain to the larger group “who,” “what,” “where,” and “why” there is an interpreter.
  - Explain that if anyone has a problem hearing or understanding, they should let you and the interpreter know.
  - Speak at a moderate pace, not too fast nor too slow.
  - Speak loud and clear so the person farthest away can hear.
  - Speak directly to your fellow participants; no need to look at the interpreters.
  - Only one person should take at a time.
  - Do not change languages too rapidly.
  - Agree on some hand gestures with the interpreter beforehand. For example:
    - <<< >>> (demonstrate a hand signal for “SLOW DOWN”)
    - ^ ^ (demonstrate a hand signal for “SPEAK UP”)
- b. **What INTERPRETERS should do to practice better interpretation:**
  - Stay as close to the original words or message as possible. “Although we always choose words, our choice should be based upon what will better convey the meaning of what was said, as opposed to what we think the speaker should say or the listener should hear.” (From The Highlander Center: *Interpreting for Social Justice*)
  - Interpreters should encourage the farmers and trainer to look at one another when speaking.
  - From *Interpreting for Social Justice*: “Some interpreters may be more experienced or skilled at either consecutive or simultaneous interpretation. Although there is considerable overlap, these two kinds of interpretation require different kinds of skills.”

# Test It Out: Role Play!

3

**TIME:** 30-40 Minutes

## **OVERVIEW:**

The facilitator supplies interpretation scenarios which participants navigate using preparation, in-session and post-session guidelines below. If you have staff and interpreters in the training, each can fulfill their normal role for role play.

## **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

Find these in the Interpreter Training Folder:

- Vocabulary list for interpretation
- Interpretation scenarios for role play
- Post-session survey

## **OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:**

By the end of this activity, participants can:

- Use preparation and reflection techniques in various interpretation scenarios.

## **STEP 1: PREPARE FOR INTERPRETING SESSION**

- Consider the questions listed below ahead of time to prepare to work with the interpreter. For example, if you need written material translated, communicate that with the interpreter beforehand to make sure they can be comfortable with it. Additionally, it is helpful to know how much content knowledge the interpreter has, to ensure you provide them with the appropriate background information.
- Questions to ask yourself before bringing in the interpreter:**
  - “How many languages are represented in the room?”
  - “Do I want interpretation into multiple languages or just one?”
  - “Do I want the interpreter to use simultaneous or consecutive interpretation?”
  - “Is the request limited to verbal interpretation or also written materials?”
  - “Has this interpreter worked with my program before?”
  - “Is the interpreter familiar with this group of farmers and/or their cultural backgrounds?”
  - “Is the interpreter familiar with the content specific knowledge (small scale agriculture)?”

## **STEP 2: REVIEW CONTENT WITH INTERPRETER**

- After considering the questions above, introduce the interpreter to the content to prepare them for the session.



b. **What to review with the interpreter before the session:**

- Vocabulary list (identify words you will use, adding content specific words).
- Explain the general content/format of the workshop/session.
- Provide details about farmers' language, literacy, and cultural background *if* the interpreter does not share the same background.

**VARIATION:**

One tester mentioned doing the vocabulary review session and general orientation on the farm! Being able to show the interpreter the actual vocabulary words you are talking about is beneficial in many ways.

- c. Ask the interpreter if they have questions about the content, farmers, vocabulary, or expectations.
- d. Remind the interpreter that you will do a quick survey with them after the session to improve future use of interpretation. Have the survey printed out already and conduct it right after the training.

**STEP 3: INTERPRET!**



Practice improvised content on the topic you have chosen.

- Use the key vocabulary words you identified
- Use all the techniques outlined in Activity 2
- Once you have practiced the vocabulary and techniques, review the post-interpretation survey to ensure staff and interpreters understand all questions.

**STEP 4: POST-INTERPRETATION SURVEY**

- a. Ask the interpreter how they prefer to answer the survey questions. Offer all options to ensure they are comfortable with the chosen format. Reading and writing allows anonymity and potentially increased honesty in their responses. If they prefer you read the questions for them and you write their responses, you can ask follow up questions as you go. Both options have pros and cons; what is most important is that the interpreter is comfortable with the format.
- b. Either have them write down answers, or answer them in person.
- c. Incorporate feedback:
  - Add necessary words to your list of vocabulary for interpretation sheet. Note on the user's guide which vocabulary should be reviewed with the interpreter ahead of time.
  - For the session you delivered, add notes into the user's guide on areas where the content might be too dense for interpretation, where it might be important to check for understanding, etc.



# Finding and Selecting Interpreters

4

**TIME:** 15 minutes

## **OVERVIEW:**

This activity is best suited for programs that are looking to establish better interpretation protocol, and is not necessarily appropriate for interpreters. At the end, the group will have basic guidelines for who should and should not interpret in various situations and circumstances.

## **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Appendix 3 (as a hand out)

## **OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:**

By the end of this activity, participants will:

- Have at least five basic guidelines for who should and should not interpret in various situations and circumstances.

## **DEVELOPER'S NOTE:**

Some refugee incubator programs have set criteria around finding and selecting interpreters, and may have default interpreters/programs they work with. It is possible to adapt or skip this section, but it can be useful to reveal who is interpreting unofficially and how the group feels about this.

## **STEP 1: BRAINSTORM**

Have the group list the different kinds of people who interpret for them, using the interpreting scenarios to spark ideas.

## **STEP 2: APPENDIX 3**

- All participants should read Appendix 3.
- Using the interpreting scenarios and the list generated in Step 1, identify "Do's" and "Don'ts" of who should interpret under certain circumstances.
- Elicit questions about the traits of good interpreters in Appendix 3. Add or amend the appendix language as needed.



## **TEACHING TIP:**

One tester used this activity and the following discussion to address the role of interpreters as advocates and individuals who can engage the community in meaningful ways. You can also include a discussion of mental health and self-care for interpreters.

# Review and Reflect

5

**TIME:** 10 minutes

**OVERVIEW:**

This activity allows participants to reflect on what they learned by answering three basic questions. The responses to these questions can be summarized and redistributed to the group later.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Whiteboard or three large pieces of white flip chart paper

- Dark markers
- Scrap papers and pencils for those who want to collect their thoughts on paper
- Tape for holding up flip chart paper

**OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:**

By the end of this activity, participants can:

- Identify what lessons around interpretation they have learned as a group.



The facilitator will pose the three following questions and give all participants a few minutes to think about or write down their responses. Then, the facilitator can collect the responses, or have participants come up and give a verbal answer to each question. You may just gather a few responses, depending on the time you have and the size of the group.

Write one question per newsprint, and take notes on the responses to that question.

**QUESTION 1:** What is something new you learned today?

**QUESTION 2:** What is something we talked about today that confirms something you already knew?

**QUESTION 3:** What do you think is important for other interpreters and staff in your position to know?

# Appendix 1: Definitions



## What does **LANGUAGE JUSTICE** mean?

Taken from The Highlander Center's *Toolkit for Language Justice*: "For us, language justice is about building and sustaining multilingual spaces in our organizations and social movements so that everyone's voice can be heard both as an individual and as part of a diversity of communities and cultures. Valuing language justice means recognizing the social and political dimensions of language and language access, while working to dismantle language barriers, equalize power dynamics, and build strong communities for social and racial justice."

## What is a **MULTILINGUAL SPACE**?

Taken from The Highlander Center's *Toolkit for Language Justice*: "A constructed space where all languages in the room are on equal footing in terms of being spoken, written on flipcharts, in the handouts, etc., and no language holds an advantage over another. Speakers of all languages share in the 'out loud' space and everybody will at some point plug in the discussion through interpreting headphones. Speaking English is not an advantage over others. A multilingual space creates room for the agenda to flow according to other cultural norms besides the dominant white U.S. cultural ones, allows for other styles of facilitation to come up, and allows people to participate with cultural pride in speaking their own language because a multilingual space works to break down the feeling of non-English as handicap."

# Appendix 2:

# Best Practice for Interpreting



*Adapted from The Highlander Center.*

## **Suggested Best Practices for SPEAKERS**

- Always explain who is speaking, what message is being interpreted, and why. Ask anyone who has a problem hearing or understanding to let the interpreter know.
- Speak at a moderate pace, not too fast or slow.
- Speak loudly and clearly so that everyone present can adequately hear.
- Speak directly to participants.
- Speak in turn, without interrupting.
- Do not change languages too rapidly as it could be difficult for the interpreter.
- Agree beforehand on hand gestures to indicate that the speaker should “SLOW DOWN” or “SPEAK UP.”

## **Suggested Best Practices for INTERPRETERS**

- Stay as close to the original words and message as possible. “Although we always choose words, our choice should be based upon what will better convey the meaning of what was said, as opposed to what we think the speaker should say or the listener should hear.” (From The Highlander Center: *Interpreting for Social Justice*.)
- Interpreters should encourage the farmers and trainer to address each other when speaking.
- From *Interpreting for Social Justice*: “Some interpreters may be more experienced or skilled at either consecutive or simultaneous interpretation. Although there is considerable overlap, these two kinds of interpretation require different kinds of skills.”



# Appendix 3: Finding and Selecting Interpreters



*Adapted from The Highlander Center's Interpreting for Social Justice Curriculum.*

## 1. Who should interpret and who should not interpret?

- If you work with individuals who are formally trained as interpreters in other settings (i.e., hospitals, courtrooms), orient them to your organization's goals and values so they can build their skills specific to soil justice popular education spaces.
- People who grew up in immigrant families and served as the family interpreter can also be good contacts. Ideally, interpreters are from the communities we work with. This helps build language justice skills and knowledge that will stay in the community and build its power.

## 2. How to establish a pool of interpreters:

- Developing a pool of skilled and reliable interpreters and translators makes this work move more smoothly. Keep contact information for and stay in communication with people who provide these services. Work to encourage organizations to hire them and compensate them.
- Having more resources for people helps stabilize a dependable pool. Be sure to recognize and appreciate the people who are providing these services! If interpreters and translators are asked to volunteer their time and skill, or are being paid less, think creatively about compensation. Compensation is key for supporting interpreters so they can continue doing this work and so you have a reliable pool of interpreters.

## 3. Key qualities of an effective interpreter:

- Focus and concentration
- Ability to talk fast and enunciate
- Good short term memory (called a cache) and recall (strengthen with memory exercises)
- Ability to convey the emotions and emphases (in addition to the words) of the person talking
- Ability to make decisions quickly
- Commitment to learning: willing to practice skills, increase vocabulary
- Humility! A big ego gets in the way of high-quality, effective interpretation
- Ability to work with others
- Respect for different kinds of discourse (that is, different ways people express themselves)



- Reliability and flexibility
- Good class, race, and gender analysis in relation to their role as interpreters, and community organizing allies in general
- Interpreters are better at interpreting into their native language, vs. into a language learned later in life. It helps to pair up interpreters who are native speakers of the two languages involved who can support each other.

#### **4. Other considerations for choosing the right interpreter:**

- If an individual is bilingual or fluent in multiple languages, it does not mean they have the skill set necessary for interpretation.
- Test the skills of an interpreter, or ask for recommendations before hiring.
- Poor interpretation or translation will be frustrating for participants who rely on those services. It can also feel disrespectful, sending the message that the organization does not consider their participation a genuine priority.