



## Translators without Borders Code of Conduct for Translators

In keeping with our vision and values, Translators without Borders (TWB) is committed to maintaining the highest degree of ethical conduct, and expects all staff, volunteers and partners to act in a manner consistent with the core values of excellence, integrity, empowerment and tolerance. To help you understand these standards, TWB has established this Code of Conduct.

### Highest standard of personal conduct

Translators will ensure that their personal and professional conduct is, and is seen to be, of the highest standard and in keeping with TWB's values and mission. Translators will:

- **Not discriminate.** Translators shall always be neutral, impartial, and unbiased. They shall not discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, race, color, national origin, age, socioeconomic or educational status, or religious or political beliefs.
- **Support and protect children.** Promote the well-being and development of children and not engage in behavior that is likely to cause harm, including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and neglect. Sexual activity with children (under 18 years of age) is expressly prohibited. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defense.
- **Not abuse role or position.** Not request, solicit or accept any payment, gift, service or favor (including sexual favours) from others, whether for their own personal benefit or for another person, in return for TWB support, goods or services.
- **Act legally.** Avoid involvement in any activities that are illegal, or contravene human rights, or compromise the work of TWB.<sup>1</sup>
- **Respect.** Refrain from any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse, intimidation or exploitation. Translators will:
  - act fairly and honestly, and treat others with dignity and respect, regardless of issues such as gender, race, religion or lack of religion, color, national or ethnic origin, language, marital status, family status, birth, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic background, caste, political conviction, HIV and AIDS status, physical appearance or lifestyle.
  - never engage in any humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior.
  - not use or condone language that is inappropriate, demeaning, or offensive towards others.

### Highest standard of professional conduct

Translators will ensure that they uphold the professional standards of good translators:

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this includes the rights of women and children, as outlined in the UN Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), specifically the guiding principle of 'the best interest of the child' (Article 3): <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>.



- **Accuracy.** Translators shall always thoroughly and faithfully render the source language message, omitting or adding nothing, giving consideration to linguistic variations in both source and target languages, and conserving the tone and spirit of the source language message.
- **Cultural Sensitivity.** Translators shall be culturally competent, sensitive, and respectful of the individuals they serve.
- **Confidentiality.** Translators shall not divulge any information obtained through their assignments, including but not limited to information gained through access to documents or other written material, with any third party outside of the translation team with whom they are working on a specific project.
- **Disclosure.** Translators shall not publicly discuss, report, or offer an opinion concerning matters in which they are or have been engaged, even when that information is not privileged or considered by law to be confidential.<sup>[2]</sup>
- **Competence.** Translators only undertake work they are competent to perform in the languages and subject areas for which they are qualified.
- **Conflict of Interest.** Translators shall disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest which would affect their objectivity in the delivery of service.
- **Reporting Obstacles to Completing a Task.** Translators should report immediately any condition that could prevent the timely and proper delivery of the translation.
- **Continuous Improvement.** Translators will strive to always improve their knowledge and skills in order to better serve the most vulnerable people.
- **High quality work.** Translators will take all steps necessary to ensure consistent delivery of work of a high professional standard, accept and responsibility for the quality of work they deliver.
- **Reliability.** Accept only assignments that they have the resources and time to do well.
- Translators will report to the relevant PM any translation requests that do not adhere to TWB's guidelines.
  - Partners can submit content that:
    - Have a clear humanitarian/development purpose that will help aid workers in crises, health or education or will be directly used by vulnerable people
    - Will be openly available without charge (some exceptions)
  - In general, partners cannot submit the following content:
    - Legal documents or provide legal translations
    - Fundraising documents
    - Lobbying or campaigning documents that promote a political point of view
    - Human resources documents
    - Documents which are proselytizing or religious in nature

Failure to uphold these standards could result in TWB removing the translator from the TWB community.

[Report any breaches of this Code of Conduct to TWB](#)



In addition, TWB is a signatory to the Code of Conduct for Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies and NGO working in humanitarian response.

### **Code of Conduct: Humanitarian Principles in practice**

The Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief was developed and agreed upon by eight of the world's largest disaster response agencies in 1994.

The Code of Conduct, like most professional codes, is a voluntary one. It lays down ten points of principle which all humanitarian actors should adhere to in their disaster response work.

The code is self-policing. TWB is a signatory and adheres to the Code of Conduct.

- The humanitarian imperative comes first.
- Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
- Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
- We shall endeavor not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
- We shall respect culture and custom.
- We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
- Ways shall be found to involve program beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
- Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
- We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
- In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognize disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.

For the complete Code of Conduct see:

<http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1067.pdf>