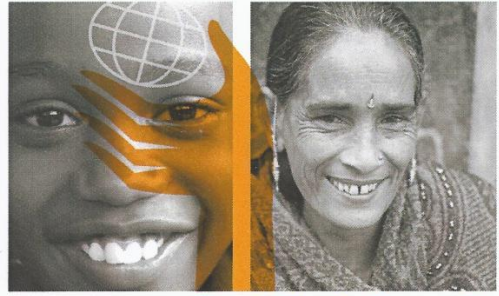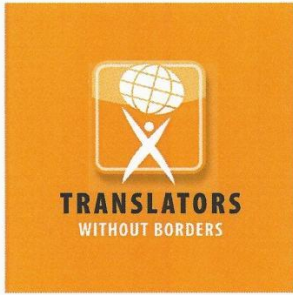## Arabic Style Guide

This style guide has been created for TWB projects to be translated into Arabic or from Arabic. The style guide is a general one but retains a focus on delivering content in humanitarian contexts. It is worth noting that this guide is not meant to supersede a translator's judgment, which remains vital in producing a comprehensive translation. The style guide is to be used a reference for cases where translators might be undecided or unsure regarding how to go about the translation.

The style guide is a tool to help translators have an idea about the style and tone of the translated content that will be used by the partners of Translators without Borders.
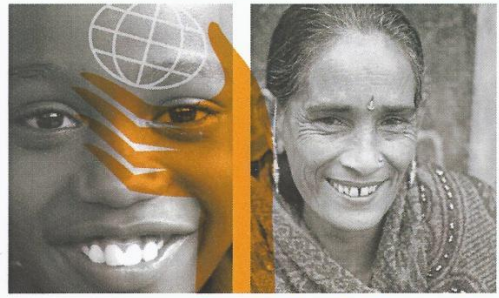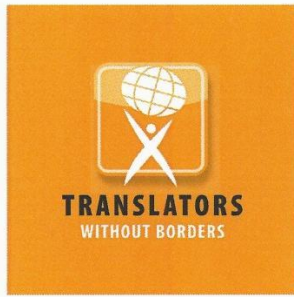
If anything is unclear or if you have any question regarding the task, please contact the project manager or leave a message on the job page. You can also discuss it with other translators on Kató Community.

Contents

I. General

Style and Language:

- Please keep the language simple and easy to understand. Avoid the use of jargon or pedantic language. Use a simple type of language that can be understood by most people, if not everyone.

Examples		
Source	**Avoid**	**Use**
Dry mouth	نقص اللعاب	جفاف الفم
Breastfeeding	رضاعة ثديية	رضاعة طبيعية

- Use the common writing style of Arabic to make the translation sound natural. Use a style that is culturally appropriate while substituting words/phrases that do not convey the intended meaning in the target language.

Examples		
Source	Avoid	Use
The distribution was made by the organization	تم التوزيع من قبل المنظمة Or التوزيع كان بواسطة المنظمة	قامت المنظمة بالتوزيع
Mosquitoes transmit deadly diseases	البعوض ينقل الأمراض المميتة	ينقل البعوض الأمراض المميتة

- Avoid using slang and idiomatic expressions.
- Some foreign words are more common than their Arabic equivalents. In those cases, it is perfectly acceptable to use such words as they are. In each case, make sure that the translation takes into account the target audience.

Examples		
Source	**Possible Translation**	**Possible Translation**
Computer	كمبيوتر	حاسوب
WiFi	الواي فاي	الشبكة المحلية اللاسلكية

- Do not translate brand names, organization names, company names, names of applications, website or service names if there is no standard translation is available in Arabic. Instead, use the name as it is in English or use transliteration.

Examples		
Source	**Standard translation / transliteration**	**Possible transliteration**
Facebook	فيسبوك	-
Oxfam	أوكسفام	-
Ashinaga	-	أشيناغا
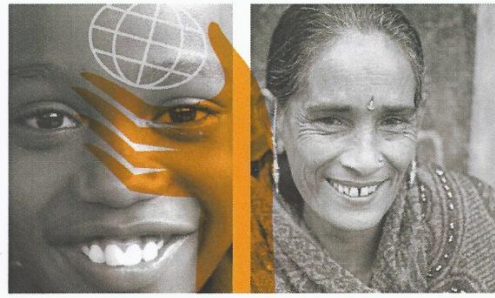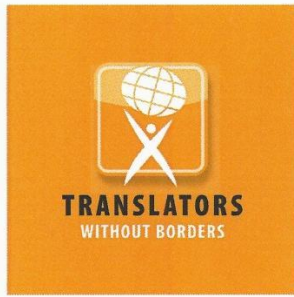
- For acronyms, use standard translations or transliteration, if available. If there is no available official translation or transliteration, you keep the term in English or use a non-standard transliteration or translation. When using non-standard transliteration, or when translating the acronym, put the English equivalent between brackets to make the reference clearer.

Examples		
Source	**Standard Translation**	**Possible Translation**
UNICEF	اليونيسف	منظمة الأمم المتحدة للطفولة
AIDS	الإيدز	فيروس نقص المناعة البشري المكتسب
Save the Children	-	أنقذوا الطفولة (Save the Children)

Tone:
- Please follow the tone of the source document. The translation should correctly reflect the meaning of the source text without being a word-for-word translation.
- Emphasize clarity, brevity, and the intent of the text, rather translating every source word. For the sake of making the meaning clearer, you may use group of words or a phrase to describe a single word that may not be readily understood by the target audience.

Examples		
Source	**One-word translation**	**Possible phrase translation**
Privatization	خصخصة	التحويل إلى القطاع الخاص
Scheduling	جدولة	إعداد الجداول

Intended Audience:
- Try to understand the intended audience of the content and change the style and tone accordingly.
- Always use the polite forms of pronouns and verbs. This excludes cases where the source text is clearly using a type of language that is intended to address a certain audience informally or in a friendly way.
- Pay attention to when the target audience is clearly one gender can be inferred clearly from the text.

Examples		
Source	**Not appropriate**	**Better**
If you find a strange thing on the ground when playing with friends, call for help[1]	في حال تم العثور على جسم غير مألوف أثناء المرح مع الخلان، يجب المسارعة إلى طلب	اطلبوا المساعدة إذا عثرتم على شيء غريب على الأرض أثناء لعبكم مع الأصدقاء

[1] Sign text meant to warn children against touching foreign objects that may be UODs
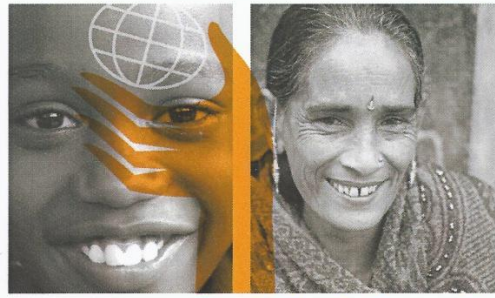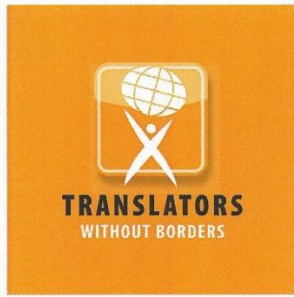
	المساعدة	
You should visit the doctor during the third month of pregnancy.	بجب عليكِ زيارة الطبيب خلال الشهر الثالث من الحمل.	يجب عليكِ زيارة الطبيب خلال الشهر الثالث من الحمل
Tests are usually carried out on patients during the first trimester.	تتم عادة إجراء الفحوص على المرضى خلال الأشهر الثلاثة الأولى من الحمل.	تتم عادة إجراء الفحوص على المريضات خلال الأشهر الثلاثة الأولى من حملهنّ.

> **Note:** *The above examples are for reference only. Please use your own writing style. The intention is to convey the meaning of the source text correctly and in such a way that the audience can easily understand the message.*

Spelling:

- Always use the hamza where it should be used. Avoid adding a hamza where it is not needed and vice versa.

| Examples	
Avoid	**Use**
إجتهاد	اجتهاد
احمد	أحمد

- There are several ways used for writing hamza in certain words. Both are acceptable as long as consistency is maintained. Furthermore, when the text is clearly directed at an audience that is known to be familiar with one use of hamza over the other, the audience's preference should prevail.

Examples		
Source	**Egyptian audience**	**Levantine audience**
Responsibility	مسئولية	مسؤولية
Responsible	شئون	شؤون

Punctation:

- Avoid leaving extra spaces before punctuation marks.
- Avoid separating "و" with a space when used as a conjunction.
- Avoid replicating the punctuation system of English in Arabic as is or. The same applies when translating from Arabic into English.

Examples		
Source	**Avoid**	**Use**
There are many useful reasons. Such as the following:	يوجد العديد من الأسباب. مثل ما يلي:	يوجد العديد من الأسباب، مثل ما يلي: **Or** يوجد العديد من الأسباب والتي
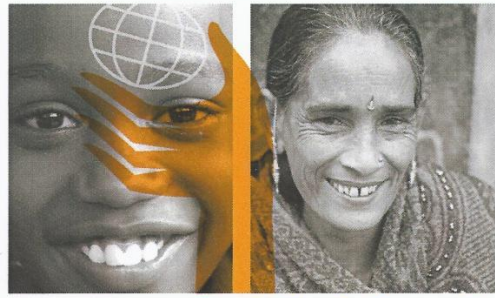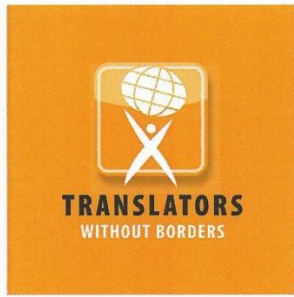
|		تشمل ما يلي:
تشمل الأطعمة المتوفرة الدجاج والسمك والخضار والفواكه.	Available food includes chicken and fish and vegetables and fruit.	Available food includes: chicken, fish, vegetables, and fruit.

Diacritics:

- In general, try to use diacritics where you believe they will improve the meaning.
- There are two systems for placing "tanween" on the final "ا". Both systems are acceptable as long as consistency is maintained. Furthermore, if the target audience is known to have a preference for one system over the other, that system should be used.
- In general, try to use the "Dhamma" when using the passive voice in Arabic.
- Try to use the "Shadda". It is highly recommended especially since the use can help avoid ambiguity.

| Examples		
Source	**Ambiguous**	**Clear**
The student studied	درس الطالب	درَس الطالب
The student taught	درس الطالب	درَّس الطالب

Kató Tips for Arabic:

- Pay close attention to segmentation when translating on Kató. Arabic sentences are usually longer, while English sentences are shorter. This means that when translating from English into Arabic, not all full stops should be full stops in the Arabic text. Similarly, when translating from Arabic into English, a long sentence is better when broken down into several smaller sentences. Make sure you check the source file when in doubt.
- Avoid copying the tab mark (→) in Kató from the source text. Instead, use the tab button on your keyboard to add the symbol. You can tell if the symbol is copied or added correctly by the color. Dark black means copied and grey means inserted correctly.
- Avoid missing spaces before or after tags when translating in Kató. There is a warning displayed when such an issue occurs. If spaces are missing, words might become connected to each other in the output file.
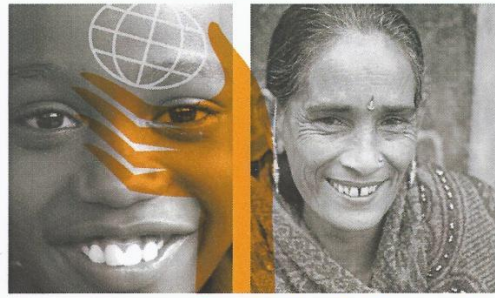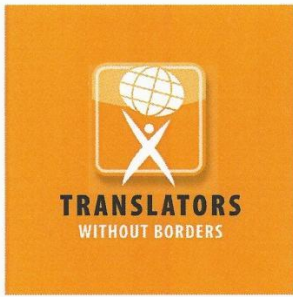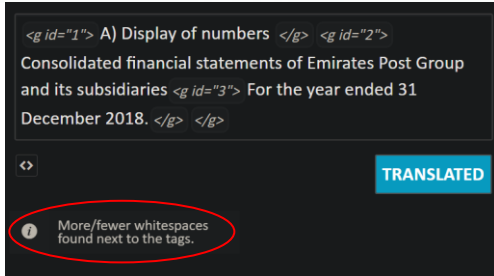
- Ignore tags that separate the letters of the word itself. Try reading the word or group of words as a whole. You can also check the document itself when in doubt.
- When you to insert a tag in Arabic, you can do it in one of three ways:
  I. You can copy paste the tags
  II. Can press "shift + ح" in order to enter them. You have a menu similar to what you see below. You can either click on the tag you need or scroll with the keyboard.
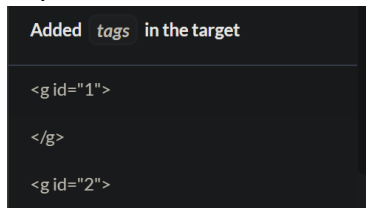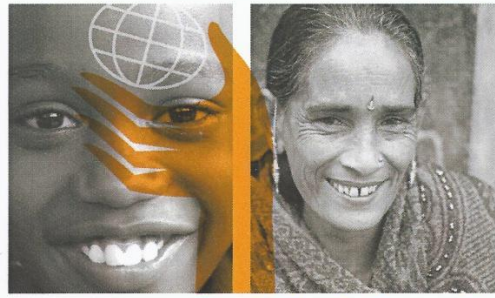

  III. You copy source to text and then translate between tags
- There are certain things to keep in mind when handling tags, the first of which is the order of tags. You will notice that the primary tags (<gid="1">, <gid="2">) have numbers and these numbers signal their position in the sentence. If the tags are not entered in the right order, you will have an error message like this:
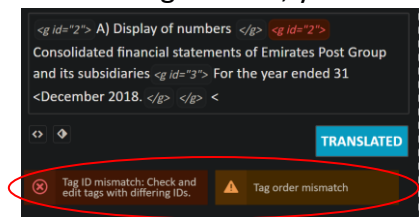
- Make sure that each primary tag (<gid="1">, <gid="2">) has a secondary tag (</g>) before the next primary tag starts. See the example below:

Examples		
Source	**Wrong**	**Correct**
The <gid="1">tsu{</g>}nami destroyed half of the <gid="2" village</g>'rs farms	تسبب <gid="1"> التسو<g/> في قرية نامي بدمار نصف القرية}<gid="2">{<g/>المزارع	تسبب <gid="1"> التسونامي<g/> بدمار نصف مزارع <gid="2"> الفلاحين<g/>
The <mark>gid="1"></mark> tsu</g>nami destroyed half of the <mark>gid="2"</mark> village</g>'rs farms	تسبب <mark><gid="2"></mark>التسونامي<g/> بدمار نصف مزارع <mark><gid="1"></mark> الفلاحين <g/>	تسبب {<mark><gid="1">}</mark>التسونامي<g/>{ بدمار نصف مزارع {<mark><gid="2">}</mark>الفلاحين}<g/>{
5<gid="1"> th</g> December 2017	5 <gid="1"> ث<g/> ديسمبر ٢٠١٧	٥ ديسمبر ٢٠١٧ <g/><gid="1">[2]

## II. Instructions for Special Types of Content

Medical:

- When translating medical texts, due care should be provided. The translator should keep in mind that this type of text is aimed at saving lives.
- When translating public messages, announcements, signs, etc. use a simple language and avoid using complicated medical terms.

Examples		
Source	**Medical**	**General**
AIDS	فيروس نقص المناعة البشري المكتسب	الإيدز
Sicknesses	اعتلالات	أمراض

- If the content is for professionals or experts, you may use the type of special language or terms that can be understood by the target audience. The following words are examples that can used to infer that the text is meant for professionals: Intramuscular (IM), Intravenous (IV), anesthetic, scalpel etc. Of course, the list is not a comprehensive one, and the use of these words does not always mean the text is meant for professionals. Translators must exercise discretion, or consult project managers when in doubt.
- Make sure you find the correct meaning for any term to be translated. Medical texts usually include a lot of acronyms or abbreviations that require specialized dictionaries.

---

[2] In this case, the tags are useless since the function they serve in the original text is not needed in the target text.
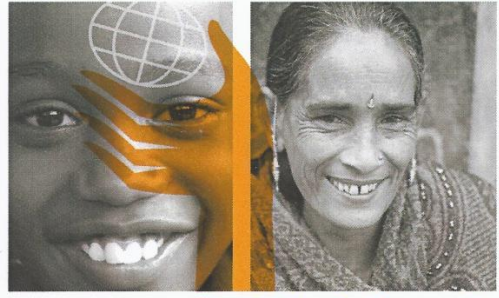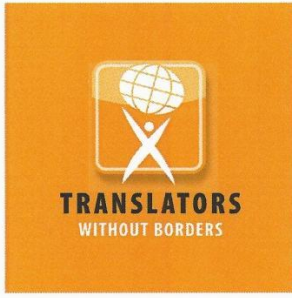
Technical:

- Understanding the target audience is the key for translating technical documents. If the target audience is the general population, use simple language and avoid jargons.
- If the content is for professionals, the translation may include technical terms that are common. Alternatively, the words can be transliterated if the transliteration commonly used or if the translation will not capture the intended meaning.

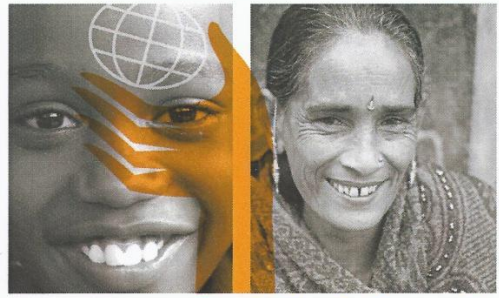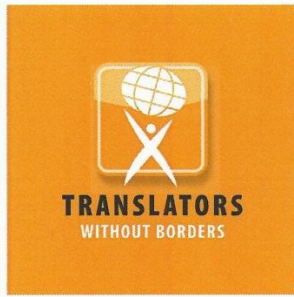| Examples		
Source	**Technical**	**General**
Alternating current	التيار المتناوب	التيار الكهربائي
Diesel	ديزل	وقود

III. **Date and Time Format**

- Use the dd/mm/yyyy date format. Example: 12/02/2018
- For the expanded date format, use the corresponding format in Arabic.

Examples	
Source	**Arabic**
December 5th, 2017	الخامس من ديسمبر / كانون الأول ٢٠١٧
5th December 2017	الخامس من ديسمبر / كانون الأول ٢٠١٧

- When translating from Arabic into English, convert Hijri dates to Gregorian dates.
- When translating am or pm, spell out the word instead of just using a letter.
- When translating the names of months from English into Arabic, use both names in Arabic.

List of months	
English	Arabic
January	يناير/ كانون الثَّاني
February	فبراير / شباط
March	مارس / آذار
April	ابريل / نيسان
May	مايو / أيّار
June	يونيو / حزيران
July	يوليو / تَمّوز
August	أغسطس / آب
September	سبتمبر / أيلول
October	أكتوبر / تشرين الأوّل
November	نوفمبر / تشرين الثَّاني
December	ديسمبر / كانون الأوّل

TRANSLATORS WITHOUT BORDERS

Translating for Humanity
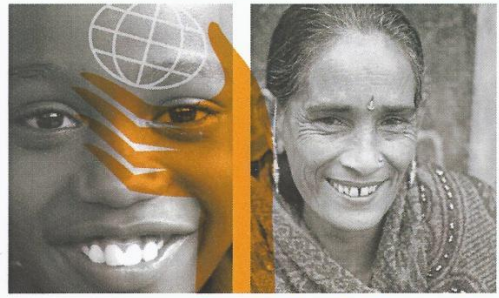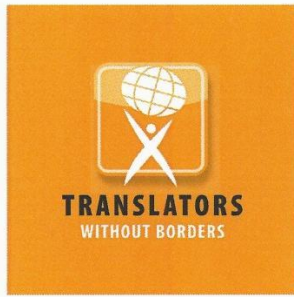
Numbers and Lists:

- When writing numbers, copying and pasting them in Kató will cause them to appear inverted. Make sure that the numbers appear in the correct order.

Examples		
Source	**Copied**	**Typed manually**
+1 (49) 555 666 999	٩٩٩ ٦٦٦ ٥٥٥ (٤٩) ١+	+١ (٤٩) ٥٥٥ ٦٦٦ ٩٩٩

- When numbering lists manually, make sure you preserve consistency and that you use a unique type of list that corresponds to each of the lists in the source.

الحروف	الأبجدية	الألفبائية	اسم الحرف	الأرقام الرومانية	الأرقام الهندية	الأرقام العربية
A a	أ	أ	ألف	I	١	1
B b	ب	ب	باء	II	٢	2
C c	ج	ت	تاء	Ill	٣	3
D d	د	ث	ثاء	IV	٤	4
E e	ه	ج	جيم	V	٥	5
F f	و	ح	حاء	VI	٦	6
G g	ز	خ	خاء	VII	٧	7
H h	ح	د	دال	VIII	٨	8
I i	ط	ذ	ذال	IX	٩	9
J j	ي	ر	راي	X	١٠	10
K k	ك	ز	زاي	XI	١١	11
L l	ل	س	سين	XII	١٢	12
M m	م	ش	شين	XIII	١٣	13
N n	ن	ص	صاد	XIV	١٤	14
O o	س	ض	ضاد	XV	١٥	15
P p	ع	ط	طاء	XVI	١٦	16
Q q	ف	ظ	ظاء	XVII	١٧	17
R r	ص	ع	عين	XVIII	١٨	18
S s	ق	غ	غين	XIX	١٩	19
T t	ر	ف	فاء	XX	٢٠	20
U u	ش	ق	قاف	XXI	٢١	21
V v	ت	ك	كاف	XXII	٢٢	22
W w	ث	ل	لام	XXIII	٢٣	23
X x	خ	م	ميم	XXIV	٢٤	24
Y y	ذ	ن	نون	XXV	٢٥	25
Z z	ض	هـ	هاء	XXVI	٢٦	26
	ظ	و	واو	XXVII	٢٧	27
	غ	ي	ياء	XXVIII	٢٨	28

- When translating letters used to identify appendices, chapters etc. replace the English letter with its equivalent. You can use a letter or the spelled-out version.

Translating for Humanity

Further Reading:

1. https://transarabizers.com/dealing_with_translation_problems_4/
2. https://www.rws.com/insights/rws-moravia-blog/nine-pitfalls-of-english-arabic-translation/
3. https://www.alfaseeh.com/vb/showthread.php?t=28320 (discussion about final tanween)