

Cultural Validation and Translation Review Toolkit: Developing Culturally Responsive and Linguistically Accurate Materials



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Introduction

When developing materials and resources in different languages for diverse cultural communities, service providers need to ensure that materials are linguistically relevant, accurate, and culturally informed. Literal translation of documents from English to another language can lead to misunderstandings, cause offense, or result in unintended messages, particularly, if documents are translated without considering cultural nuances and references of the target audience. Research in Translation Studies shows that translations need to not only have source and target language competency, but there needs to be considerable knowledge of the source and target cultures ([Eyckmans 2017: 1](#)).

By adding Cultural Validation and Translation Review to the material development process, organizations can ensure:

- **Relevance:** Materials informed by the community are likely to have a greater impact.
- **Accuracy:** Materials that are reviewed are more likely to result in an accurate, accessible, and appropriate product.
- **Acceptance:** Accurate and relevant materials help increase trust between the intended audience and resource provider.

The cultural validation process can also reduce overall translation time and costs by limiting the number of adjustments needed post-translation.

This toolkit is designed to help service providers and organizations better understand the principles and practices of Cultural Validation and Translation Review. It also includes templates, tips, and case studies to aid providers who are new to the Cultural Validation and Translation Review process.

Cultural Humility and Language Justice

Cultural Validation and Translation Review are ways service providers and organizations can practice cultural humility and take concrete steps toward language justice. Cultural humility is the ongoing process of learning from others with different cultural backgrounds and engaging in self-reflection. Cultural Validation and Translation Review includes partnering with communities to ensure content and items produced are resonant and impactful, and being open to discovering and correcting unintended biases and privileges in materials and resources. Cultural humility in practice means working from a space of sincere curiosity and respect while centering agency and dignity.

Language justice is a movement to advance societal inclusion and shared power by advancing all people's ability to communicate and be understood in their preferred language. Cultural Validation and Translation Review seek to include community input in what is being said, how it is said, and where it is disseminated (i.e., preferred communication channels). Language justice recognizes that messages that are neither tailored nor inclusive of various and diverse values, beliefs, and practices risk being less resonant, more confusing, and even offensive to individuals, especially those who may have been historically marginalized.

What is Cultural Validation and Translation Review?

Cultural Validation

Cultural Validation is the process of bilingual, bicultural community members reviewing and providing feedback on content to ensure materials have the best possible framing and approach for the intended audience. Cultural Validation happens before a translation occurs. Materials that can be culturally validated include print, audio, video, web content, imagery, graphics, and more.

Cultural Validators can:

- Suggest how the material can be improved to be easily understood and accepted by the intended audience.
- Flag material that may be culturally misaligned or misunderstood.
- Suggest words, phrases, or images that best capture cultural and linguistic nuances and semantics, making the materials more culturally resonant.
- Verify if the register (degree of formality, vocabulary, and context) aligns with the intended audience.

Translation Review

Translation Review is the process of a trained translator reviewing a professionally translated document to ensure the translation is accurate, understandable, and culturally appropriate. Language can be subjective, and different translators may have contradictory opinions about the “best” way to translate a sentence, phrase, or document. Therefore, Translation Reviewers should understand that they are not reviewing a translation to offer a translation critique or alternative translation, but are reviewing it to identify:

- Missing words or phrases
- Incorrect words or phrases
- Words or phrases that obscure or change the intended meaning
- Outdated terms and expressions
- Words or phrases that could be considered offensive, stigmatizing and/or confusing
- Translations misaligned with the texts’ purpose, message, and/or intended audience
- Dialect, tone, or literacy level that is different than what is intended
- Alignment between translation and intended format and delivery (for example, certain languages like Pashto and Arabic can be written more formally than when it is spoken. Translation reviewers can review translations to check whether they have been translated appropriately for spoken versus written formats.)

Translation Reviewers should receive training on the scope of their role and the process for suggesting changes to the original translation.

When Should You Use Cultural Validation and Translation Review?

Cultural Validation should ideally be used for most material development, but especially when developing materials designed to motivate or influence an audience or if the material contains content of a sensitive nature. Because including Cultural Validation in the material development may increase the development time, Cultural Validation is most likely to be used for longer-lasting, ‘evergreen’ materials and less likely to be used for materials that need to be released quickly or that are short and simple (i.e., “Vaccines are now available for children over the age of 12”).

Cultural Validation should not be used for materials where an exact translation is critical (for example, legal documents).

Examples:

USE Cultural Validation	DO NOT USE Cultural Validation
Flyer to encourage women to have an annual medical exam	Contracts and agreements
Brochure on COVID-19 vaccination facts and myths	
Social media campaign about early childhood development	Notice about a common community product that contains lead
Curriculum or workshop activities on raising your children in a new country	
Video on diabetes management with recipes	Checklist for what is required to adjust one’s immigration status
Vetting visuals for web content	

Translation Review should be used whenever possible to ensure the accuracy of a professional translation. It is especially important to use Translation Review when:

- Documents are of a sensitive, important, or complex nature
- Materials are meant to be ‘evergreen’ or long-lasting
- You are working with a new translator or translation company

Short, simple, and time-sensitive messages may not need Translation Review when the original translation is done by previously vetted and trusted professional translators.

Who Can Provide Cultural Validation and Translation Review?

There are no clear or accepted industry standards or certifications on who can provide Cultural Validation and Translation Review; however, the following is recommended:

Cultural Validators:

- Cultural Validators should be bilingual (fluent in English) and share characteristics with the intended audience community (i.e., dialect, live in same/similar communities, gender, etc.).
- Ideally, the Cultural Validator is bicultural, meaning they have in-depth knowledge of the intended audience community and U.S. culture.
- If remote feedback is being sought (i.e., through an online form), Cultural Validators need to have access to a computer, have basic digital literacy, be able to open documents, use track changes within documents, use the 'comment' function in the preferred software (i.e., Word, PDF, etc.), and send and receive attachments through email.
- All Cultural Validators should be informed about the intended goal of the material and audience so that they can provide appropriate feedback.
- If the material covers specialized and nuanced topics (e.g., early childhood development), it can be helpful to consult a subject matter expert (e.g., pediatrician) in the relevant topic area, as well as a Cultural Validator who reflects the intended audience (e.g., a parent from the community).
- If the material is sensitive, long-lasting, and has a high chance of being repeatedly interpreted, it is best to utilize several Cultural Validators to ensure that different groups within a community have an opportunity to voice their opinion and reach a consensus.

Translation Reviewers:

- Translation Reviewers should be professional translators who share key characteristics with the intended audience (for example, using a translator fluent in the specific dialect of the targeted language).
- Because language changes over time, using a translator who currently lives in the same community as the intended audience is ideal. However, this is not a hard rule, as some translators are familiar with language trends by accessing online news, literature, and social media.
- Translation Reviewers should be oriented to their unique role and how it differs from translation itself. Translation Reviewers should receive specific instructions related to the goal of the material, who is the intended audience, and what is the desired tone and format.
- Translation Reviewers must have strong digital literacy skills, be able to provide feedback in both English and the target language, provide comments in Word and PDF documents, use email attachments, and maintain version control using shared platforms such as Google Drive, Box or DropBox.

It is important to note that if the Cultural Validator is also a trained translator, they can play both Cultural Validation and Translation Review roles.

Where to Recruit Qualified Cultural Validators and Translation Reviewers?

Ideally, an organization will have a several people in each needed language who can provide Cultural Validation and/or Translation Review. This is especially helpful if there is a disagreement between the Translator and Translation Reviewer and you require a third opinion to help resolve the disagreement.

An organization may already employ trained interpreters, translators, or staff suited to be Cultural Validators or Translation Reviewers. If so, ensure these staff members have adequate time to devote to the assigned tasks and are fairly compensated for their effort and expertise.

Cultural Validation may also be done through partnering with an ethnic community-based organization or by conducting key informant interviews or community focus groups. If so, it is important that service providers make sure these are done in convenient locations, and offer transportation and childcare support, as well as financial compensation or participant incentives for individual's time.

Other possible sources of recruitment for qualified individuals include, but are not limited to:

- Existing contracts with professional language interpreters and translators or related agencies
- University language departments
- [The American Translators Association's Directory](#)
- Targeted search for community groups on communication/social platforms (LinkedIn, Slack groups, professional networking groups)

How to Facilitate Cultural Validation

Cultural Validation can be done individually or in focus groups depending on time, level of sensitivity of the material, and how long-lasting the material is expected to be. For example, a flyer for an upcoming community health event may just need one person for Cultural Validation; developing a curriculum may need several people with varying levels of understanding of the topic who provide ongoing support; and a campaign to encourage vaccination may require one or more community focus groups.

Before reviewing material and providing input, Cultural Validators should be oriented to the intended:

- Purpose of the materials
- Audience (i.e., culture, dialect, gender, age, etc.)
- Literacy level of audience
- Format of materials (written, spoken, visual, etc.)
- Tone (attitude or emotion expressed)
- Register (level of formality)

The feedback being sought from the Cultural Validator(s) should be clear and targeted. Cultural Validators should be asked if the material meets the set intentions as outlined above. Sample questions include:

- Do you believe this material achieves its intended purpose?
- Do you feel that this material is best suited for the [intended audience]?
- Will the material be easily understood by people with a literacy level of “x”?
- Is the material well-suited for [intended format]?
- Does the material have the intended tone?
- Does the material have the intended register?
- Are the images used culturally appropriate?
- Are any informational symbols or illustrations intuitive and appropriate for your community?

Cultural validators may also be asked:

- Is there anything within the content that might be considered particularly sensitive to the intended audience?
- Is there anything within the content that might be considered offensive to the intended audience?
- Is there anything within the content that might be easily misunderstood by the intended audience?
- Do you anticipate that there will be words, phrases, or concepts that will not translate directly? If so, do you have recommended words, phrases, or concepts in the target language to keep in mind prior to the translation?
- Do you have suggestions for improving this material so it can be meaningful and impactful to the intended audience? Please provide as much detail as possible.

If Cultural Validators are asked to use a form to provide feedback, they should be oriented to the form. If they are asked to provide feedback directly on the document, they should be given specific instructions for how to do this. Cultural validators should be told how to share their feedback (i.e., email, Box, etc.).

To see an example of a Cultural Validation Form, see Appendix A.

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In addition to Cultural Validation, it is helpful to conduct focus groups, surveys, or key informant interviews to understand what types of materials and channels are most accessible and preferred by the intended audience.

This includes:

- Multimedia Format: Audio, video, written, etc.
- Presenter: Community member, community professional (i.e., doctor, teacher, etc.), animation, etc.
- Distribution Channel: Social media, flyer, PSA, SMS, etc.

Translation

To get the best translation possible, sharing key information with the chosen professional translator or translation agency is helpful. This includes the purpose of the materials, intended audience, formatting information, intended tone and register, and specific instructions related to acronyms or other word choices. See Appendix B for an example of a Translation Instruction Form.

How to Facilitate Translation Review

Once the translator or translation company completes a translated text, it is recommended to use a standardized form to provide instruction to the Translation Reviewer on:

- Whom they can contact with questions
- Due date of translation review
- Their scope and role
- How to incorporate changes into the document
- How to manage translation of certain words like government agencies or acronyms
- The context of the material including:
 - Purpose of the materials
 - Intended audience (i.e., culture, dialect, gender, age, etc.)
 - Literacy level of audience
 - Format of materials (written, spoken, visual, etc.)
 - Tone (attitude or emotion expressed)
 - Register (level of formality)

Always be clear on the amount and type of feedback needed and include examples. Explain that constructive and rationalized feedback would better serve the review process. For example, ask the review to refrain from feedback such as “this added word would serve the community.” Instead, ask the reviewer to include a rationale: “This added word would serve the community better because it references the equivalent type of health promotion event in Somalia.”

To see an example of a Translation Review Form, see Appendix C.

Additional Tips for Success

- Make sure you have sufficient funds budgeted for cultural validation, professional translation, and the translation review (Translation companies usually offer a review as part of the translation process. However, the review provided is usually only a proofreading of the translated text. The translation itself is not checked for accuracy against the source language). Additional factors to consider include the following:
 - Some languages are more costly to translate
 - High demand for a language may lead to low availability of providers, which may also increase costs and longer translation turnaround time
 - Technical texts are usually more expensive to translate/review
 - If you produce videos, fact sheets, or podcasts based on the translated text, services such as video production, graphic design, and voice-over will incur additional costs
- When working with a translator or a translation company, inform them that you will be instituting a translation review process that may require subsequent corrections on their end. Ask them if they are amenable to this before agreeing to the translation. A translation company may charge a fee for this process.
- For languages that do not use the Latin alphabet, such as Arabic, Dari, Pashto, Burmese, Ukrainian, etc., make sure that all parties involved in the translation, review, design, and publication process are using the same font, because different fonts may not render the same way on different computers or applications. For example, the Burmese alphabet can be represented by different fonts. Reviewers have indicated that users prefer the Zawgyi-One font while several translation companies use the Pyidaungsu font. Therefore, it is important to standardize the font for everyone involved in the process.
- Some translation companies provide graphic design services. Make sure to ask for a quote for any design services, as they are priced separately.
- When assessing the timeline for your project, remember to include turnaround time for translation, review, possible correction of materials, and graphic design or additional production, as applicable.
- Use a project management tool to keep track of the different stages of your project and document versions. Make sure files are clearly labeled and organized in a system like Box, DropBox, or Google Drive. This helps ensure that if there is ever a disagreement about a translation, you can track all changes and file versions.

Appendix

Forms:

- Appendix A Cultural Validation Form
- Appendix B Translation Instruction Form
- Appendix C Translation Review Form

Case Studies:

- Case Study 1: Cultural Validation of a Sexual Reproductive Health Glossary in Dari and Pashto
- Case Study 2: COVID-19 Outreach Materials Translation Review
- Case Study 3: Cultural Validation Feedback on Best Format of Materials for Uptake by Rohingya Audiences
- Case Study 4: Translation Review of Standardized Materials
- Case Study 5: Branding for Afghan Health Portfolio

Glossary:

- [CORE Cultural Orientation Glossaries for Interpreters](#)

Additional Resources:

- [National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services \(CLAS\) in Health and Health Care](#)
- [Your Right to Assistance in Your Language: Basic Information about Federal Language Access Rights](#)
- [Limited English Proficiency Working Group](#)
- [Toolkit for Written Translation](#)
- [Guide: Creating Effective Translations](#)
- [Content Validation Guidance and Checklist](#)

Cultural Validation Form

Review due date:

Document Name:

Contact Name: Email: Phone:

Where to submit after review:

Instructions

Step 1: Read the “Important Information Before Reviewing” section.

Step 2: Read or look at the material in its entirety.

Step 3: Complete the “Reviewer Feedback” section.

If you have specific suggestions for changes, please include them as tracked changes on the original document and include reasoning in the Comment function. All feedback should be in English except for suggested words or phrases in the intended audience’s language.

Important Information Before Reviewing:

Intended Audience:

Country	<input type="text"/>	Language	<input type="text"/>
Dialect	<input type="text"/>	Gender	<input type="text"/>
Age	<input type="text"/>	Other considerations:	<input type="text"/>

Cultural sensitivities & important characteristics to be aware of:

Literacy Level:

Tone (attitude or emotion intended to be expressed):

Register: Formal Informal Other:

Other formatting instructions:

Reivewer Feedback

Your Name: Date:

Email: Phone:

Do you believe this material achieves its intended purpose?

Yes No Maybe

If 'no' or 'maybe', please explain:

Do you feel this material is appropriate for the intended audience?

Yes No Maybe

If 'no' or 'maybe', please explain why, where and what are the recommended changes (marked on the original document):

Will this material be easily understood by people with the intended literacy level?

Yes No Maybe

If 'no' or 'maybe', please explain:

Is the material well-suited for the intended format?

Yes No Maybe

If 'no' or 'maybe', please explain:

Do you believe this material uses the right tone?

Yes No Maybe

If 'no' or 'maybe', please explain:

Do you believe this material is in the right register?

Yes No Maybe

If 'no' or 'maybe', please explain:



Is there anything within the content that might be considered sensitive to the intended audience?

Yes No Maybe

If 'yes' or 'maybe', please explain why, where and factors for consideration (marked on the original document):

Is there anything within the content that might be considered offensive to the intended audience?

Yes No Maybe

If 'yes' or 'maybe', please explain why, where and factors for consideration (marked on the original document):

Is there anything within the content that might be easily misunderstood by the intended audience?

Yes No Maybe

If 'yes' or 'maybe', please explain why, where and factors for consideration (marked on the original document):

Do you anticipate that there will be words, phrases or concepts that will not translate directly?

Yes No Maybe

If so, do you have recommended words, phrases or concepts in the target language to keep in mind prior to the translation?

Do you have suggestions for ways to improve this material so it can be meaningful and impactful to the intended audience? Please provide as much detail as possible.

Translation Instruction Form

Contact Name:

Email: Phone:

Date Translation is Needed By:

Document Name:

Target Language:

Preferred Characteristics of Translator (country, gender, dialect, region, etc.)

Purpose of the document:

Intended audience:

Country	<input type="text"/>	Language	<input type="text"/>
Dialect	<input type="text"/>	Gender	<input type="text"/>
Age	<input type="text"/>	Other considerations:	<input type="text"/>

Cultural sensitivities & important characteristics to be aware of:

Literacy Level:

Tone (attitude or emotion intended to be expressed):

Register: Formal Informal Other

Formatting

Intended format of materials:

Print Audio SMS Web-based Other:

Ensure the formatting of the Source text is reflected in the target text – bold, italics, underline, bullet points, numbering, etc.

Specific Font to use (If applicable):

Other formatting instructions:

Additional Instruction

Do not translate the following words:

Instructions for how to manage acronyms:

Glossary information (add attachment as needed):

Any other instructions:

Translation Review Form

Review due date:

Document Name:

Contact Name: Email: Phone:

Where to submit after review:

Instructions

Step 1: Read the “Important Information Before Reviewing” section.

Step 2: Read or look at the material in its entirety.

Step 3: Complete the “Reviewer Feedback” section.

If you have specific suggestions for changes, please include them as tracked changes on the original document and include reasoning in the Comment function or use the Translation review Tracker at the end of this document. All feedback should be in English except for suggested words or phrases in the intended audience’s language.

Important Information Before Reviewing:

Translation Review helps ensure that a translation is accurate, understandable, and culturally appropriate. Translation reviewers should not provide an overall critique of the translation or offer alternative ways to approach the translation. Instead, they should review the translation to identify:

- Missing words or phrases
- Translated words or phrases that are incorrect
- Translated words or phrases that obscure or change the intended meaning
- Outdated terms and expressions
- Words or phrases that could be considered offensive, stigmatizing and/or cause major confusion
- Translations misaligned with the stated linguistic and cultural context (the purpose the text serves and who it is meant for)
- Dialect, tone, or literacy level that is different than what is intended

Background Information

Purpose of the document:

Intended audience:

Country	<input type="text"/>	Language	<input type="text"/>
Dialect	<input type="text"/>	Gender	<input type="text"/>
Age	<input type="text"/>	Other considerations:	<input type="text"/>

Cultural sensitivities & important characteristics to be aware of:

Literacy Level:

Tone (attitude or emotion intended to be expressed):

Register: Formal Informal Other:

Key terms and definitions (attach Glossary if available):

Instructions regarding the translation of terms and acronyms (i.e., translate/transliterate/keep as is/see official existing translation in the target language, etc.):

Any other instructions:

Reivewer Feedback

Your Name: Date:

Email: Phone:

Do you believe this material achieves its intended purpose?

Yes No Maybe

If 'no' or 'maybe', please explain:

Will this material be easily understood by people with the intended literacy level?

Yes No Maybe

If 'no' or 'maybe', please explain:

Do you believe this material uses the right tone?

Yes No Maybe

If 'no' or 'maybe', please explain:

Do you believe this material is in the right register?

Yes No Maybe

If 'no' or 'maybe', please explain:

Is there anything within the content that might be considered offensive, stigmatizing and/or cause major confusion for the intended audience?

Yes No Maybe

If 'yes' or 'maybe', please explain why, where, and factors for consideration (marked on the original document):



Do you have suggestions for ways to improve this material so it can be meaningful and impactful to the intended audience? Please provide as much detail as possible.

Section of document (page, paragraph)	Content of concern	Reason for concern (in English)	Suggested changes (can be in target language)

Case Study 1: Cultural Validation of a Sexual Reproductive Health Glossary in Dari and Pashto

Purpose

The Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Glossary in Dari and Pashto was developed to provide a standardized reference tool of SRH terms. The Glossary is intended for use by 1) professional interpreters in medical settings to improve understanding and thus care for Afghan patients and 2) professional translators to ensure accuracy and cultural understanding in SRH materials and resources geared towards the Afghan community.

Process

1. Developed a comprehensive list of commonly used SRH terms and their medical definitions.
2. Sent the complete list of terms and definitions to three Afghan cultural validators (CV), who were asked to:
 - Determine if any of the English terms or definitions would be culturally inappropriate to use.
 - Determine if the materials could be appropriately translated or if different words or phrases should be used.
3. Sent the list to a translation company for translation into Dari and Pashto. The glossary included the CVs' feedback and notes to serve as a reference for the translators as they completed the translations.
4. The translated glossary was then sent to two new CVs, both fluent in Dari and Pashto and both with medical backgrounds, for a final review.

Result

Having the English terms and medical definitions reviewed by CVs prior to translation helped ensure more appropriate and meaningful translations. In addition, although most words and phrases were considered appropriate since they would be used in a medical setting, one CV suggested adding colloquial expressions for each term to give translators and interpreters more options for translation and interpretation.

Examples of CV comments include:

English terminology and definition	Language	Translation of Terminology	CV Feedback
Sexual agency: The ability to identify, communicate, and negotiate one's sexual needs.	Pashto	د جنسي اړیکو په اړه د مشورو ورکوونکي دفتر	This translation is incorrect as it is a word-for-word translation. In this instance, the word "agency" is translated to a word that refers to an office. It is better to translate it as 'جنسي اختیار'
Fallopian tubes: Muscular tubes that connect the ovaries to the uterus. Fertilization of an egg usually takes place in a fallopian tube.	Dari	لوله های فلوپ	It is better to add the other (colloquial) name for fallopian tubes as well because it is mostly known by the Afghan community by this name, which is 'نفیر'

Case Study 2: COVID-19 Outreach Materials Translation Review

Purpose

A suite of COVID-19 materials was developed for more than 12 language audiences to encourage prevention and mitigation measures including masking and vaccination. Getting cultural validation on all languages from the English version was restrictive from a time and financial perspective, so cultural validation was included in the translation review. In addition to reviewing for accuracy, translation reviewers were asked to review for cultural relevance and acceptance.

Process

Translation reviewers were chosen from each target language and sent a [Translation Review Form](#) with instructions.

Result

Translations reviewers from different linguistic and cultural groups offered varying feedback, allowing the material to be adjusted for the best cultural relevance. Some examples include:

- **Ukrainian** Ukrainian translation reviewers suggested using a different tone in the materials. They noted that in the Ukrainian language, telling the audience they “should” do something or “will” do something is considered too authoritative and would be viewed in a negative way. Instead, they suggested that words like “consider” and “could” would be more acceptable to the audience.
- **Dari and Pashto** Dari and Pashto Translation Reviewers suggested different imagery, noting Afghan women’s more typically conservative dress.



- **Congolese Swahili** The Congolese Swahili translation reviewers felt the tone was correct but noted problems with accuracy and appropriateness.

	Yes	No	Comments
Is the translation accurate?		X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling error remove v from the word “vinahitajika” under it’s always safest to wear a mask section fourth line • In the Even vaccinated people after safest with a mask box remove “wa weke’ and replace with “na”
Does it use the right tone?	X		
Is it culturally appropriate?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the masks protect against covid 19 section, on the fist check point, the word pepo was used which applies to demons. That would bring about more controversies. After utaugua, uki pumua virusi kama iko mu hewa. The rest of the words after should be deleted. • In the same section second check second line remove the first u in mutu. Also remove anagonjwaka and replace with “ana jisikya ni mgonjwa.”

Case Study 3: Cultural Validation Feedback on Best Format of Materials for Uptake by Rohingya Audiences

Purpose

To determine the best way to convey information to newly arrived people from the Rohingya community.

Process

Engaged in conversations with two CVs from the Rohingya community to solicit feedback before preparing resource materials.

Result

The CVs provided the following feedback:

- It may be difficult to get accurate cultural validation for written Rohingya materials.
- According to the CVs, Rohingya individuals had a written language generations ago, but the Burmese government ensured that it was erased. There are efforts by the Rohingya community to resurrect the language, but they haven't made much progress in identifying and using the old writing system. Separately, there are phonetic alphabets for the Rohingya language in both the Roman and Arabic alphabets, but these are not standardized.
- From their initial feedback, some individuals in the younger generation will understand what the message is saying, but older people and anyone who hasn't received a great deal of education are not going to be able to understand the text.
- There is the feeling from the CVs that there are strong feelings around outsiders (English/Arabic speakers) trying to create a written language for them using their alphabets when the Rohingya had a writing system that has been destroyed.
- The CVs strongly suggest that we should focus on disseminating audio and video materials to Rohingya individuals because the written materials will be somewhat alienating.
- They explained ultimately that it's not offensive/irritating for Rohingya folks to see written Rohingya but maintained that it would not be effective to develop written materials.

Case Study 4: Translation Review of Standardized Materials

Purpose

The Center for Adjustment, Resilience and Recovery ([CARRE](#)) piloted an evidence-based Mental Health intervention within the Afghan community in the U.S. that required standardized assessment measures to support strengthening and understanding within positive child-parent relationships, addressing child development, and effects of stress and trauma. Ensuring compatibility and adaptability without changing the intended meaning of the instruments, [CARRE](#) initiated the process through cultural validation as part of a Participatory Translation Review practice to incorporate various perspectives from the Afghan community related to areas such as parenting, affection, and child development (please see the [CARRE](#) resource "[Participatory Translation Review Practices](#)" for more information).

Process

1. [CARRE](#) contacted the developers who own the standardized measure to ask for permission to translate and culturally validate the measure, which was granted.
2. [CARRE](#) then identified a group of Dari-speaking CVs from the Afghan community to review the material and reach a consensus on feedback.
3. The initial review was in English to determine if phrases or sentences would have a cultural equivalent or be appropriate for Afghan audiences, including cultural nuances for the developer to kindly consider. These were recorded in a collaborative Excel sheet.
4. The CVs' feedback was shared with the developers to see if they were open to changing the phrasing to reach semantic equivalency in Dari.

Result

See examples from the CVs' consensus.

Original sentence in English	Feedback	Recommendation
I find it hard to cuddle my child.	Term for "cuddle" to be very specific depending on gender or other norms, circumstances; expression of cuddle, deeper than a hug, male gesture of cuddling is typically a kiss on the head, or cuddling may come as a form of verbal expression	Showing affection is done differently in various cultures. For the Afghan community for example, cuddling is not common especially for men. Perhaps a father may have a kiss on the head or hand as a sign of protection/support where the mother might show more physical affection. This also depends on the age of the child. In Afghanistan instead of physical affections, there is more of an emphasis on verbal expressions. Perhaps this could be rephrased as "I find it hard to show appropriate age and gender specific physical affection." Open to developer suggestions!

Original sentence in English	Feedback	Recommendation
I am able to put myself in my child's shoes	Idiomatic phrase, does not translate literally	Put myself in my child's place.
I am able to stick to the rules I set for my child.	Stick is not an easily translated concept. I respect my own rule, I will enforce my own rule (parent- ability)	I respect my own rule, I will enforce my own rule. (Or, "I am able to respect the rules I set for my child").
I am able to help my child reach their full potential.	"Full potential" term needed to be discussed	Terminology related to child development, the Afghan community might approach this in specified ways, related to the type of development (psychological, physical, or spiritual) when speaking to a provider (capacity for comprehension vs all elements of the child). The group was looking for a term to encompass all types of development as a phenomenon. "I can help my child reach what they are capable of."

Case Study 5: Branding for Afghan Health Portfolio

Purpose

Since 2020, the National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants (NRC-RIM) used branding that was generalizable to the more than 40 linguistic communities they prioritized for their COVID-19 health communications portfolio. When establishing a new health portfolio for Afghan newcomers that covered additional topics, they wanted to make sure their materials would resonate with that community specifically. NRC-RIM used a cultural validation process to choose new colors, design elements, and photos for the new portfolio.

Process

- Engaged in a listening session with representatives from the Afghan Health Initiative, a key partner in their work.
- Launched a survey to determine the colors, filtering out responses from people who were not Afghan or did not work closely with Afghans to determine the final palette.
- Researched design elements common in Afghan art and incorporated them into three different options that were shown to partners for feedback and selection.
- Used stock images that were chosen by partners at the Afghan Health Initiative until a photo shoot could be scheduled and completed.
- Conducted a photo shoot of Afghan families in consultation with the Afghan Health Initiative; due to cultural sensitivities around photography in Afghan culture, this process included conversations to ensure full consent as well as fair compensation to the participating families.
- Continued the cultural validation process to inform the content, messaging, and translation of each individual topic covered in the portfolio.

Result

A new brand that honored the preferences of Afghan people and supported effective health communication efforts.

