

Working Group 4: What can Translators and their Associations do to Promote Literary Translation?

Four themes:

- Legal and financial circumstances of translators
- Visibility
- Virtual community for literary translators
- Target groups for dissemination of insights/recommendations

Legal and financial circumstances of translators

Key points

- Different countries have different legal systems, so there is no single, simple solution – ideas will need to be tailored to the country/region concerned.
- Associations have the task of making sure their members are armed with the necessary information and of looking after their interests.
- In many countries translators are not classified as creative artists.

Insights

- A proper contract will translate into fair rates.
- Copyright needs to be related to a country's law of contract; if there is no legal protection for contracts, it will not be possible to enforce copyright.
- There is strength in numbers: strong translators associations are needed to negotiate and fight for the rights of their members

Recommendations

- FIT The International Federation of Translators should compile and make available a database of (the best) contract and copyright law provisions around the world for consultation by countries/associations where there is no such law and/or produce a primer/guidelines on contract and copyright law.
- Associations should lobby for copyright law if there is none in their country and then monitor and make sure the law is enforced.
- Associations should ensure that future and current translators are made aware of all aspects of the local contract and copyright law and their rights.
- Associations should lend support for the establishment of translators associations in countries where there are none.
- Associations should work to provide lists of literary agents or copyright lawyers prepared to assist literary translators in negotiating the best possible conditions OR use part of members' subscriptions to purchase or retain such services as a benefit of membership.
- Associations should advocate for translators to be classified as creative artists and to receive related benefits.
- The model of copyright collecting agencies is a good one and should be investigated by countries where they do not exist.

Visibility

Key points

- Translators are invisible. 'The translator always sits behind the writer.' Bring him/her out!
- In many countries there are no functioning organisations to help them gain visibility.
- The translator's plight is also unknown to the public – if people don't know translators exist, how can they know about their circumstances?

Insights

- Strategies that catch the imagination are needed to highlight translation, what it involves and how specialised the work is

- Performance-based strategies/events are the most successful.

Recommendations

- Events that involve public interaction should be foregrounded at book fair events, e.g. a translator working at a screen, using various techniques – the computer, word-by-word, finally the translator him- or herself, so audiences can see what is involved and can offer comment.
- Individuals should add credits for translators to Wikipedia articles about books where this information is not given.
- Associations should agitate with organisers that offer writing prizes to have specific prizes for translators.
- Google should be alerted to International Translation Day in the hope that they will come up with an eye-catching way of foregrounding it.
- Associations, other organisations or translators should encourage publishers to involve the translator in the promotion of translated literature. Use contacts with bookshops to suggest a reading or promotion to the owner (will probably work better in a small town).
- Associations and translators should support WALTIC, as this is a platform where translators and writers participate on an equal footing.
- Associations and translators should consider means of improving visibility in the graphic/performance arts, e.g. having subtitlers' or translators' names appear prominently in credits.
- Efforts should be made to showcase literary translation at international book fairs.
- Associations and translators who have contact with the media should try to get greater coverage, also through modalities other than just interviews or reviews (e.g. a monthly feature with a short story translated into different languages – short intro by writer, then interviews with various translators about the process of translating).
- Alumni of this seminar should use and alert others to use every possible avenue for publicising relevant happenings, e.g. submit news of your new translations to the newsletter of the Salzburg Global Seminar or alumni magazines, which has a wide distribution but is not an avenue translators would normally think of.
- Use the web! Translator blogs like Daniel Hahn's, YouTube interviews, Wordle, internet forums.
- Associations and individuals should write to Arts Councils etc. in their own countries and ask for support for translation.
- Translation centres offering residencies for literary translators should be supported on a sustainable basis.
- Local associations should petition the European Commission to resume their support for translators' houses offering residencies for literary translators.
- Take up some of the suggestions made by CEATL following their survey.
- Associations could develop an eye-catching ad campaign accompanied by brochures that could be distributed on campuses, in libraries, etc. Example will be presented: large photos of translators identified by the names of the authors they have translated and the slogan "Meet the translators – your new old friends!".

Virtual community for literary translators

Key points

- Aim: to share knowledge and offer opportunities for social networking

Insights

- A collaborative database could be useful for tracking statistics on what has been published, placing summaries of new books that might be considered by editors for publication, especially in minority languages.
- A social networking site would offer a platform for translators to share information and experiences.

Recommendations

- Persons interested in such a project should make a start and make the information available to other participants.