

THE POWER OF WORDS



Translators without Borders

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2017 –
December 2018



TRANSLATORS
WITHOUT BORDERS



Safety. Shelter. Health.

Water. Education.

These words can change lives.

But only if they are in the right language.

You've helped us use the right words, in the right language, to communicate with those who are most vulnerable. Our translators, and the words they translate, have literally helped save lives.

A message from:

Andrew Bredenkamp, Chairman of the Board and Aimee Ansari, Executive Director

Language and access to information are intrinsically linked. Speakers of marginalized languages are less able to receive and understand information. They are less likely to be able to search for information they need. Lack of literacy and poor access to technology compounds the information gap for many.

To address this gap, we focus on the people themselves to change the communications power dynamic, shifting control to those who speak marginalized languages. We find solutions at the intersection of language, technology, and the humanitarian and development world. Big or small; global or local; text or voice—these solutions help vulnerable people communicate more effectively. And it's still our volunteers and language specialists who make solutions possible, funded by sponsors and partners.

We've grown a lot over the last year. The merger with the Rosetta Foundation grew our language communities, increased the language pairs we offer, and improved our language technology platform. Our collaboration with humanitarian responders brought our crisis response program closer to financial sustainability. We developed operations in three countries and built a global team. We've trained and supported translators and interpreters in marginalized languages and laid the groundwork for new innovations in voice, offline glossary tools, and machine translation.

Overall income increased by 29% annually during the 18 month period which this report covers (pro-rated). This reflects our investment in infrastructure and sustainability. We continued to diversify funding, with a 35% increase in earned income.

Throughout these changes, we've remained focused on people, the languages they speak, and the words they use to communicate. In this report, you'll find examples of words that serve as examples of the work we do around the world. We invite you to absorb these words and reflect on the stories behind them.

One word can impact someone's life. But only if they can understand it.

Impact



TWB delivers language solutions for real world problems that people face. Every day, hundreds of people living in poverty or crises need information. Humanitarian and international development workers support refugees, draft emergency response plans, train staff members, and respond to community needs and concerns. They don't always have the right words in the right language and format to communicate with people living through crisis or in poverty.

TWB provides the language and communications tools that help people who need life-changing support to get the information they need.



During this period, we:



Supported 230 partner organizations worldwide, including global partnerships with the World Health Organisation (WHO), the American Red Cross, and regional agreements with the International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Europe and Asia Pacific.

Trained 322 people from 44 organizations in nine cities and four European countries.

Influenced the **Global Compact for Migration** and **Global Compact for Refugees** to include language rights and created a plain-language version of the **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)** guidelines.

Created a common service approach for more effective delivery of communication solutions in Bangladesh.

- Built text and voice glossaries in five languages.
- Advocated on the importance of language. TWB's work was highlighted by [The Economist](#), NPR, [DevEx](#), and PRI among many others.

This is the Rohingya word for “cyclone,” and it’s a critical part of helping people stay safe, since cyclones can devastate the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, Rohingya is the only language all Rohingya refugees speak and understand. And while Rohingya is similar to the locally spoken language, Chittagonian, crucial words like “cyclone” are different. Interpreters need to know which word to use so that everyone can understand warnings. Through the development of the TWB Glossary for Bangladesh, more people are able to communicate effectively about extreme, dangerous weather.



Community

Our dedicated community of language specialists provided more words, in more languages, allowing us to communicate with more people, in more ways, and in more places than ever before.

Our community grew tremendously:

TWB and The Rosetta Foundation merged, bringing together our communities of translators.

Over 400 new translators joined our community every month.

From April 2017 to December 2018, the number of languages we offered grew from **186 to 215**, including Tok Pisin, Fulah, Marghi, Swati, Wolof, and Malayalam, enabling us to reach vulnerable people.

Our community translated over **25 million** life-changing words in 2018 alone.



This diverse and committed community helped us improve communication around the world:

French was the most common language our community worked in, followed by **Spanish, Arabic, Bangla, Portuguese, and Russian.**

We expanded our language offerings from translation to also include **plain language services, pictorial communication, subtitling, and voice-over support.**





On-the-ground Language Solutions

Partnerships

Our partners help us build our community of translators, develop innovative humanitarian programs, and deploy new language technology. Most importantly, through their support, they help us grow a global understanding of the importance of language.

That's why expanding our network of partners is critical. From merging with the Rosetta Foundation to developing crisis response materials with the World Health Organization, our partnerships help more people communicate effectively.

From training to technology, through our innovative programs and partnerships, TWB:

- Using **simple data cards** and working with RefuCom, translated legal and asylum information into Arabic, Farsi/Dari, and Urdu for refugees. The data cards were distributed and passed around refugee communities, ensuring that at least 100 people were better able to understand their rights.
- Developed **Interpreter Connect**, an innovative solution matching 275 interpreters and 20 participating NGOs for the European refugee response.
- Conducted the first language assessment among people displaced by violence and poverty in **northeast Nigeria** in July 2017. We found that people were not getting information in a language they could understand. We deployed a team to support partners in the region, working in an extremely complex language environment.
- In October 2017, deployed the first rapid language assessment team in **Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh**, six weeks after a major influx of Rohingya refugees prompted international assistance. By January, TWB and two partners had developed a unique common service for communicating with refugees.

In a humanitarian crisis, the ability to respond and communicate in new and creative ways, in the right language, can mean the difference between safety and fear, confusion and understanding, independence and autonomy. Our unique partnership approach ensures the right words reach people when they need them.

This is the Arabic word for “security.” Existing Levantine Arabic machine translation engines couldn’t understand when a person said they ‘felt safe,’ or were talking about ‘security branches.’ With its Gamayun initiative, TWB developed language technology that can tell the difference, so everyone can feel secure.

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On-the-ground Language Solutions

Language data and evidence

People working with communities need detailed information about peoples' communication preferences. This includes data about the languages, formats, and channels which the communities are comfortable to interact in. But often, this data does not exist. **Through our data, evidence, and mapping programs, more organizations can access the language and comprehension data they need to develop their programs and communicate effectively.**



These new approaches to evidence and data help drive better solutions and programming:



TWB's **comprehension studies** help identify the existing communications gaps. For example, through our comprehension study in Greece, we learned that only 44% of refugees in our comprehension study were able to understand written content provided by responders.



Needs assessments help us identify the immediate language needs in an area or response. For example, TWB's assessment in northeast Nigeria found that humanitarian efforts to communicate effectively were impeded by critical gaps in information and capacity.



Within 48 hours of a sudden onset crisis, TWB provides **language maps** and language data on the affected areas. We created seven language maps that helped humanitarians understand what languages are spoken in sudden-onset crises from Guatemala to the Philippines.

This is the Hausa word for “stress.” Through our work with focus groups in Northeast Nigeria, we learned that the word “stress” only meant physical stress to respondents, such as the physical strain you feel after a day of hard labor. This makes it difficult for an aid worker to communicate about “mental stress.” Through our conversations with the community, we learned that it’s best to pair this word with a descriptor, such as “physical” or “emotional.” Guidance like this helps everyone communicate more effectively about stress and mental health.



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Innovation



Innovation is more than a buzzword. As our on-the-ground programs grow, we lay the foundation for new innovations in voice, offline glossary tools, machine translation, and the gathering of language data.

This has helped us lead in the application of high tech solutions and new language products to solve critical communication issues:

The development of new language data and technology to solve stubborn problems:

We created Kató Speak to facilitate voice translations in marginalized languages;

We began building parallel text and voice datasets in marginalized languages so that we could better fuel machine translation engines that can expedite the delivery of life-changing words.

By developing systems to gather more language data and coach partners on how to use plain-language principles that promote clearer, more inclusive communication:

We edited the 20th anniversary edition of the Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.

Our Nigeria story map and dashboard helped humanitarians make data-driven decisions on language for the first time.



The award-winning TWB

Our innovations were recognized both in the language technology industry and the humanitarian sector:

- Winner of the prestigious “**Game-Changer Invader**” Innovation award from language data industry experts, TAUS.
- Short-listed for the **UNHCR innovation** award for Kató Speak.
- Winner of **AppSheet Innovators Award**, an award that recognizes apps that change how work is done, influencing positive changes in organizations and the world.

This is the Spanish phrase for “human trafficking.” Through our work with partners in South America, our community translated hundreds of informational articles about human rights and trafficking warning signs. By providing this information in languages other than English, more people can stay safe and informed about their rights.



Organizational Capacity



During the reporting period we scaled our operations significantly. We developed policies, processes, and systems to support that growth. We are especially proud of how we:

- Built a lively and collaborative internal culture;
- Improved our security management and human resources processes and procedures;
- Increased our translation capacity by improving our online translation platform and expanding our community of translators;
- Improved our data-management systems so we can track our operations and make more objective decisions, particularly for translation and financial management;
- Expanded TWB's innovative Words of Relief program;
- Developed world-class advocacy capacity;
- Expanded our diverse global team. In the reporting period, TWB staff lived in approximately 30 countries, spoke about 50 languages, and were 70% women.



Financials

TWB changed our fiscal year to align with the calendar in the period that this report covers. In these charts, financial year 2018 covers April, 2017 - March, 2018. Financial year 2018.2 covers nine months from April, 2018 - December, 2018.

Over the 21 month period, TWB increased core reserves and expanded our income sources.

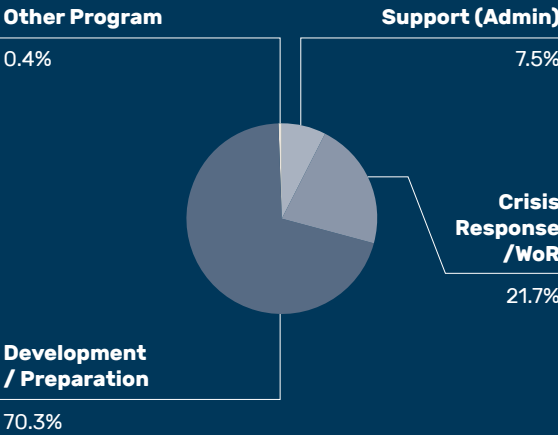
The value of generous in-kind donations helps us remain nimble and get more words to the people who need them. Thanks to the massive effort of TWB's translator community, in-kind donations are worth more than all other income sources combined. This total also reflects the outpouring of support from commercial organizations and individuals who have provided software and other essential support.

Increased income from grants, strategic partnerships, and major individual donations allowed us to build financial stability and capacity, and grow our programs and impact:

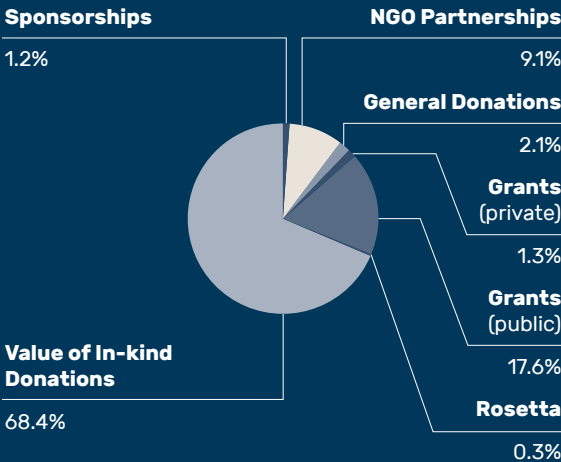
- Earned income from NGO partnerships increased by 75% during the period 1 April 2018 to 31 Dec 2018 compared to the previous financial year. It now represents 28.7% of our overall income.
- Grant revenue increased by 35% and earned income specifically related to crises grew 94% in FY 2018.2.
- Income from individual donors remained healthy through the 18 month period, although total sponsorships decreased slightly.
- The generous support of our sponsors and donors allowed us to respond quickly to sudden onset crises and develop new technology solutions.



Income & Expenditure (including in-kind donations)

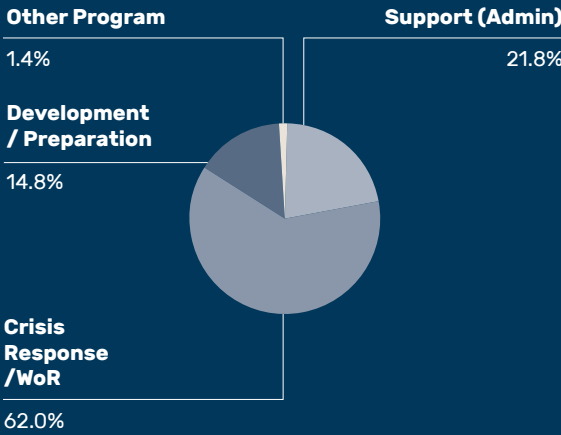


FY18.2 Expenses with in-kind donations

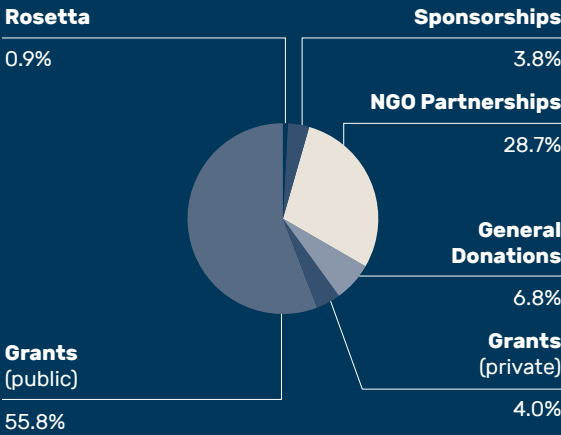


FY18.2 Income with in-kind donations

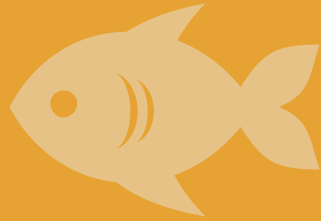
Income & Expenditure (without in-kind donations)



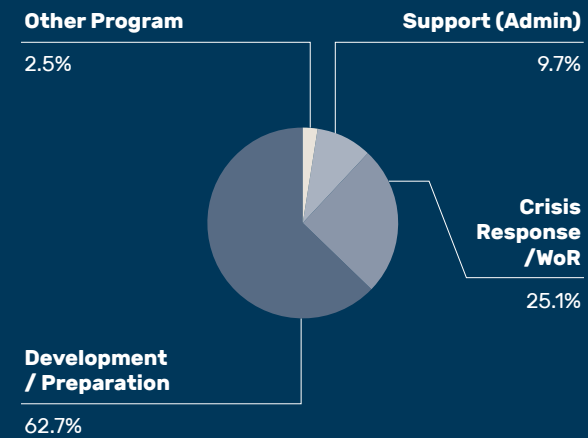
FY18.2 Expenses without in-kind donations



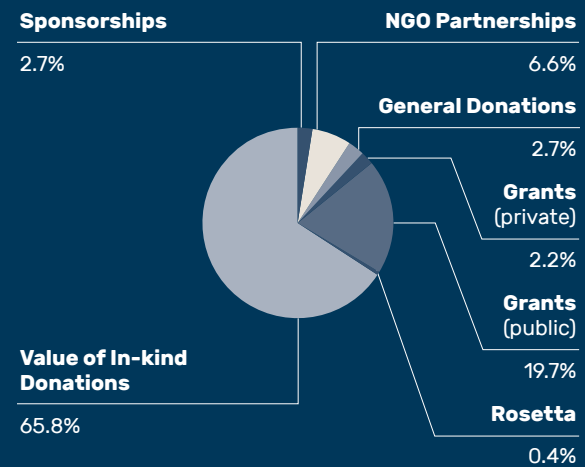
FY18.2 Income without in-kind donations



Income & Expenditure (including in-kind donations)

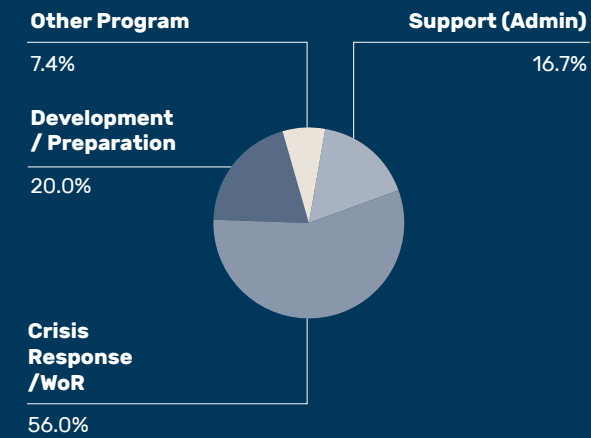


FY18 Expenses with in-kind donations

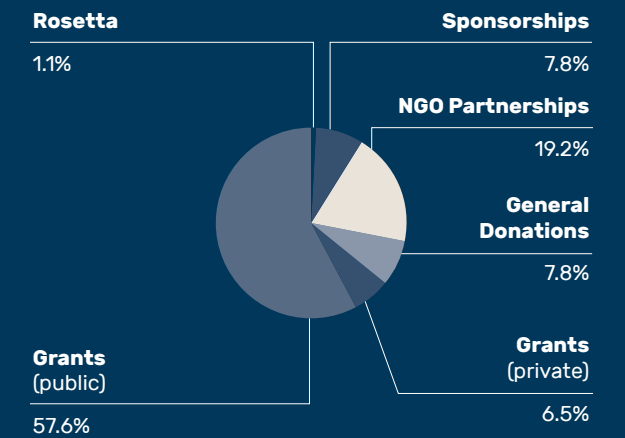


FY18 Income with in-kind donations

Income & Expenditure (without in-kind donations)



FY18 Expenses without in-kind donations



FY18 Income without in-kind donations



TWB is committed to adhering to relevant codes and standards of good practice, including:

- UN Global Compact
- Principles of Digital Development
- TAUS Dynamic Quality Framework
- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief
- Common Humanitarian Standard
- DFID Supply Partner Code of Conduct

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